

THE
Nature and Design
OF
HOLY-DAYS
EXPLAINED:

Or, Short and Plain
REASONS and INSTRUCTIONS
For the Observation of the
FEASTS and FASTS

Appointed to be kept by the
CHURCH of ENGLAND.

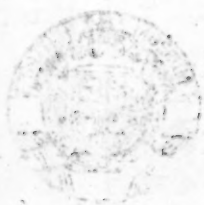
Adapted to the meanest Capacity.

*If he will not hear the Church, let him be un-
to thee as a Heathen Man, a Publican, Mat.
viii. 17.*

The THIRD EDITION.

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The INTRODUCTION.

THE literal meaning of the words Feasting and Fasting, is so obvious that it needs no explaining.

But when we mention Feasts or Fasts, we suppose them Days or Seasons set apart for that purpose. And of these there are two sorts either private or publick.

Private Feasts are when upon some extraordinary occasion, as particular Mercies or Deliverances vouchsafed, or upon our own or some Relation or Benefactor's Birth-days, we invite some Friends or Neighbours to a more than ordinary Entertainment, and bestow some more than usual Charity to the Poor.

Private Fasts are, when with relation to our selves we afflict our Bodies with Fasting, either to prepare our selves for holy Duties, or to implore success upon some extraordinary Undertaking, or to avert some threatening Disaster; or when for some time we resolve upon a Course of Mortification to discipline our selves

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for some secret Sins that lie heavy upon our Consciences.

The publick Feasts and Fasts are enjoyned by the Authority of the Church, and are called Holy-Days, being separated from common ordinary Days for God's holy Worship, and consequently are to be spent in works of Piety and Charity.

The holy Feasts are such, wherein (besides every Sunday in the Year) we commemorate some eminent and signal Mercies which God has vouchsafed his Church. And among these there are some of a higher nature, as having a particular regard to the great work of our Redemption, as Our Blessed Saviour's holy Nativity, Circumcision and Epiphany, his Glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and his fulfilling of his Promise by the Descent of the Holy Ghost; and lastly, the Festival in honour to the Holy, Ever-Blessed and Glorious Trinity.

And since our Blessed Saviour after his Ascension was pleased to manifest his Glory in the Death of his Saints, the primitive Christians overjoy'd to see those great Heroes resist unto Blood with so much Christian Bravery, Constancy and Resolution, had their Martyrdoms in so high a Veneration, that they celebrated them with the same expression of Joy

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as the rest of the World did the Birth-days of their Kings and Emperors; the annual observation whereof was in a little time enjoyn'd by the whole Church with the greatest strictness, and from thence handed down to Posterity for their perpetual Edification, Instruction and Imitation.

By the holy Fasts are meant such Days or Seasons wherein the Church in conformity to primitive practice has enjoyn'd all her Members to subdue the corruptions of their Nature and Affections by the Duties of Fasting and Humiliation, and more than ordinary strict course of penitential Devotion. Such are Good-Friday, Ash-Wednesday, and the Passion-Week (these I mention first as Fasts of a higher Rank, the reasons given in the following Tract) the Ember-days, the other ordinary days in Lent, Rogation-days, every Friday in the Year, except Christmas-day, and generally the Eves of such Holy Days as do not happen in a time of Feasting, as betwixt Christmas and Lent, or Easter and Trinity-Sunday.

Now as we are all obliged to observe the Feasts and Fasts of the Church, not only from primitive practice and in obedience to the Injunctions of our own national Church, corroborated by the Laws of the Land, but also as we value our own Souls for their Benefit and In-

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struction, so if any Persons who are yet ignorant in these matters will allow themselves the leisure, upon every Holy Day in the Morning to read the short Discourse they shall here find concerning the keeping of that day (which will take them up but a very few Minutes) it is to be hoped they may hereby be made so sensible of the occasion, that they will not for the future fail to observe such days so as becomes regular and devout Christians.

ADVENT-

ADVENT-SUNDAY.

The nearest Sunday to St. Andrew's-Day, whether before or after.

THis day we celebrate the Festival of the Advent of our Blessed Saviour: The word Advent signifying Coming or Approaching, the Church has distinguish'd this and the other three following Sundays by the name of Advent-Sundays, to remind us in a more especial manner of our blessed Saviour's Advent or Coming in the Flesh, *i. e.* of the approaching holy Season appointed to be religiously observ'd by all Christians, in remembrance of our Saviour's Coming to visit us in great Humility, by taking our Nature upon him; the true Cause of all our Exultation and Joy, for a Mercy to which we can never make a suitable return. Yet, that the Jews might not be surpriz'd with the unexpected Coming of the promis'd *Messias*; therefore, according to the Predictions of the Prophets, that *Elias* must first come, St. *John* the Baptist was sent as the Harbinger, to prepare the Way of his Lord and Master. Thus, that we may not fall into any unbecoming Transports, or excess of Joy, for want of a due preparation for the reception of so great a Blessing, the Church has set apart these four Weeks of Advent (which precede the time of our Blessed Saviour's Coming in the Flesh) to be spent in Works of Piety and Charity, that our Hearts and Minds may be devoutly prepar'd and qualify'd for the Celebration of this great Festival of the Birth of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, who at this acceptable time

came into the World to save Sinners, lest our vicious Lives should any ways frustrate the pious design of our holy Mother the Church, by rendering her Solemnities either offensive to our Adversaries, or displeasing to the Almighty.

The Collect for the first Sunday in Advent (which has a reference both to the Epistle and Gospel following) is an excellent Prayer for all seasons, so more particularly for this; wherein the Church not only takes Notice of our Blessed Saviour's first Coming, but also puts us in mind of the use we are to make of the great Benefits we have receiv'd thereby, that by casting off the works of Darkness, and putting on the armour of Light, at his second coming to judge the World, we may be so ready and prepar'd for that great Account we must then make, that we may do it with Joy and not with Sorrow, and receive that Crown which he has prepar'd for them that persevere unto the end.

The Epistle awakes and rouzes us out of the sleep of Sin and Ignorance, to behold this Sun of Righteousness arising upon us with healing in his Wings; from whence we are enabled to make calculations for Eternity: As also, it gives directions how to celebrate the Feasts of the Church, *i. e.* not in Rioting and Drunkenness, Chambering and Wantonness, Strife and Envy; but, by putting on the Lord *Jesus*, by laying aside our Lusts and Vanities, and practising Virtues opposite to the Vices the Apostle here mentions, that we may, with pure Hearts, and devout Minds, approach the Throne of Grace.

The holy Gospel seems rather to precede our Saviour's Passion, than his Birth, but is chiefly used here (say the Rationalists) for these words, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, *i. e.* Blessed be he who for us Men, and for our Salvation
came

came down from Heaven, was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin *Mary*, &c. Or (as the Apostle speaks) the Myſtery of Godlineſs, the Son of God manifeſted in the Fleſh, juſtify'd in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels; for which we can never too often ſing *Hofanna in the Highest*.

The Offices of the Church, *i. e.* the Collects, Epistles and Gospels, for the other Sundays in Advent, promiſcuouſly mention both our Bleſſed Saviour's firſt Coming in the Fleſh, and his ſecond Coming to Judgment, perhaps in Compaſſion to our Infirmary, to give a check to Humane Nature; leſt our Raptures of Joy for the great Condeſcenſion, expreſs'd in our Bleſſed Redeemer's taking our Nature upon him at his firſt Coming, ſhould make us ſlight, neglect or forget to prepare ourſelves for that great and terrible Day of the Lord, when he ſhall come again with his holy Angels, to judge both the Quick and the Dead, and reward every Man according to his Works.

CHRISTMAS-DAY: *Dec. 25.*

O R,

The NATIVITY of our Bleſſed Saviour
JESUS CHRIST.

THIS is the Day which the Lord hath made, let us rejoyce and be glad in it: And ſo great reaſon we have for it, that it would be Ingratitude in us, ſurpaſſing the worſt of Men and Devils, if we ſhould ſuffer ſo great Bleſſing, as the World this Day receiv'd, to paſs by without a grateful (annual) acknowledgement.

If it were neceſſary, we might trace the Obſervation of this Day from the earlieſt practice of the Church;

Church; but tho' we should be mistaken in the very Day, yet if we perform the Business thereof, with that pious Gratitude and Devotion suitable to so holy a Season, our blameless Ignorance would excuse such a well-meant pious Design.

At the end of Two Thousand Years, the Coming of the *Messias* was the general Expectation of the Jews, and accordingly the repeated Prophecies in the Old Testament, as well as other Traditions concerning our Blessed Redeemer, were at this time exactly fulfilled; for in *Bethlehem* (according to the Prediction of *Micah* 5. 2.) of *Judea*, the Eastern part of the World (fulfilling that of *Zech.* 3. 8 whose name is *East*) was completed, as upon this Day, the Prophecy of *Isaiah* 7. 14. *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, &c.*

Now, it must needs fill us with Admiration as well as Gratitude, if we seriously reflect upon those gracious Methods God took, in making known to the World the mysterious Incarnation of his only begotten Son, whom he sent at this time to take away the Sins of the World.

First, Lest the blessed Immaculate Virgin should be too much surpriz'd with the sudden Miracle he intended to work in her, he dispatched one of the heavenly Host (his usual Embassadors upon extraordinary Occasions) with that divine Complement to the Mother of our Lord, *Hail Mary! Thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee, thou art blessed among Women*: And then, to remove that innocent diffidence she express'd in that modest objection, about the possibility of having a Child without knowing a Man, the Angel explain'd himself, by telling her, *the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and the Power of the Highest should over-shadow her.* And,

2dly, After her chaste Espousals to *Joseph*, to clear her Reputation, and take away all Umbrage, left

lest he should suspect her Virtue, an Angel was likewise sent to him, to assure him that what was conceiv'd in her was by the Holy Ghost, and not a humane but a heavenly Production: These were the previous Methods God made use of to bring into the World the holy Child *Jesus*, who at this time, to deliver Man, did not abhor the Virgin's Womb. But,

3dly, To fix our Thoughts more seriously upon so divine a Contemplation, let us consider the Circumstances of his Birth; which (to shew that his Kingdom was not of this World) was so far from the external Pomp and Grandeur that usually attends the Birth of Princes, that, on the contrary, it was as remarkable for its Obscurity: For *Joseph* and *Mary* coming to *Bethlehem* to be tax'd, in obedience to *Cæsar's* Decree, and all the Inns (when they came) being taken up by earlier or richer Guests, the best Lodgings they could get, was a poor Stable, where the Blessed Virgin was deliver'd of her first-born Son, who perform'd the duty of a pious and tender Mother, wrapt her Infant in swadling Clothes, and made use of the Manger for his Cradle. Here admire we the miraculous Condescension of our blessed Redeemer, that he who was before all Worlds, and by whom the World was made, should, for our sakes, himself become a Babe; and that He, whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, should be found wrapt up with a few swadling Clothes, within the narrow dimensions of a Manger. Yet,

4thly, Notwithstanding this Birth was, in outward Appearance, so mean and obscure, yet God took immediate care to publish it to the World by his Celestial Heralds: For no sooner was the holy Child *Jesus* born, but the Glory of God shone round about a Company of Shepherds that were watching their Flocks by Night, who be-

ing dismay'd at so sudden and surprizing a Lustre, an Angel presently dispell'd their Fears, by the delivery of that comfortable Message, *Behold, I bring you Tidings of great Joy, for unto you is Born this Day, in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

And if we do regularly joyn in the Church's admirable Offices, in the remembrance of the Salvation this Day brought to us, we need no other Arguments to heighten our Devotion.

The proper Psalms appointed, are a continu'd Song of Thanksgiving for this Day's miraculous Blessings, whereby the Church calls upon us, not only with the Shepherds, to glorify God for what we this Day hear and see; but also to joyn with the holy Angels in that divine Hymn, *Glory to God on High, on Earth Peace, Good Will towards Men.*

The first Lesson is a Prophecy of our Blessed Saviour's Incarnation: In the second we read the Prophecy fulfill'd.

The Collect teaches us how to pray, that we may be partakers of the Benefits of his Birth; whereof the Epistle and Gospel give us a short History; for which wonderful Mercies we are directed (in the Preface in the Communion Service) how with Angels and Arch-Angels, and all the Company of Heaven, we ought to laud and magnifie the Glorious Name of God, &c.

St. STEPHENS-DAY, Dec. 26.

THIS and the two following Festivals are the immediate Attendants upon the great Feast of our Blessed Saviour's Nativity: And to find that glorious Birth-day thus immediately succeeded by a Funeral Pomp, seems (methinks) softly
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to put us in mind of our Mortality, whisper to us how short a time there is between the Cradle and the Grave, and remind us how speedily our Corruption must put on Incorruption. And 'tis not improbable, that the Martyrdom of this Day's Saint has this place allotted in our Calendar, with a pious design to give a Check to the Exorbitancy of our Joy, which otherwise might have transgress'd the Bounds of Reason and Religion. For why may not the Church (as we read *Job* did) after so high a Feast as this of the Nativity, call all her Children together, as it were to a common Sacrifice to sanctifie themselves: Lest (being less upon their Guard) whilst their Minds were transported with Joy, they might have offended God in the height of their Entertainments, by committing something unbecoming their Christian Profession.

And as the Church seems very careful so sweetly to compose the Discord which those two Passions of Joy and Grief would raise in us, as that there should be nothing harsh and disagreeing, but a compleat Harmony in all our Christian Performances: So likewise her wise and provident Disposition of these Festivals seems powerfully to recommend to us that great Gospel-Duty of Self-Resignation, and a chearful Submission to the good Will of God, whether it be in Life or Death.

The Brightness of our Blessed Saviour's Incarnation would never have been thus beclouded and overshadowed with the Death of his Saints, were it not silently to teach us that our very being Disciples and Followers of Christ may seem to require thus much of us, that he that would save his Life in another World must lose it in this; (*i. e.*) that it may so happen that there shall be no way left us whereby we may be made Glorious Christians, but by our Sufferings; and indeed the

Truth

Truth of this Doctrine was but too frequently experienc'd in the first Ages of the Church, whilst none but Wolves presided over both their Shepherds and their Flocks.

'Tis certain no Doctrine was ever more directly thwarting the Dictates of Flesh and Blood, and therefore to engage Men to the Practice of it, necessary it was that *Christ* himself should recommend it; he who as he was Man, knew what it was to suffer, and as God knew how to support them that suffer'd for his Sake, as he did the Blessed Apostles and other holy Martyrs in a miraculous manner; particularly the holy Saint of this Day, who had the Honour to be the first Martyr for the Christian Religion.

Who and what this holy Saint was, the occasion and manner of his Sufferings, with the Use we are to make of such Examples, we are at large instructed in the holy Offices for the Day appointed by the Church.

The first Lesson which is taken out of the *Proverbs* of *Solomon*, contains some general Observations the Wise Man made of Impiety and religious Integrity; which are here read to admonish us how to avoid the former, and according to the Example of this Day's Martyr to adhere to the latter.

In the two Second Lessons, which are taken out of the 6th and 7th Chapters of the *Acts* of the Apostles; 1st, We have a Relation of the great Wonders and Miracles he wrought among the People, after his being endued with the Holy Ghost, and Power from on high, by the Imposition of the Apostle's hands, upon his being ordained a Deacon.

2^{dly}, We have an account of his disputing with certain of the Synagogue, who not being able to resist the Wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke

spake suborn'd false Witnesses, who accused him before the Council of Blasphemy against *Moses* and against God, the Temple and Law. The Requital this good Man meets with for his charitable Endeavours to propagate Truth, and reclaim them from Error, is to be pursued with loud Clamours, bitter Invectives, and false Accusations by those very Persons he took so much pains to oblige. And 'tis, God knows, even at this time no strange thing to see good Men for their forward Zeal to maintain Truth, bring upon themselves the Punishment due to a bad Cause.

3dly, We have his Defence at large before the Council, where he appeared with the Beauty and Splendor of an Angel; and deliver'd to them such bold Truths as cut them to the Heart, and made them gnash with their Teeth. No sooner were they baffled by the divine Force of those Arguments dictated by that Spirit which Christ promis'd (when they were brought before Rulers for his sake) should speak in, direct and assist them in such Conflicts; but they endeavour to hide the shining of his Face, by throwing all the Dirt upon it they can, thus to veil by their unjust Slanders, and obscure the Lustre of it with all the odious Reproaches their pregnant Malice could invent and suggest. And where Arguments fail'd they resolv'd to stick at nothing that might accomplish their Designs. Thus their Contest about Religion degenerated into Malice and ended in Blood (which that Portion of Scripture made use of for the Epistle, gives an account of, being a Continuation of the same Chapter.) And indeed when Mens Eyes are once blinded with the Mists of prejudiced Opinions, they are soon misled into the most dangerous Precipices of Actions; against the Fury whereof, neither the best Cause, nor the highest Merit and Integrity,

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is of sufficient Force. They had been already the Betrayers and Murderers of Christ, and now they will make his Doctrines and Ministers undergo the same Fate. For as if they were afraid the divine Rhetorick of this powerful Charmer should have any good Effect upon them, they cry'd out with a loud Voice, that they might drown the Cries of their own Consciences, then stopt their Ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the City, and ston'd him. Where,

In the last place we shall consider this holy Man's Demeanour in his last Agonies, which was every way becoming a Saint of God (whose Example is propos'd to us by the Church, to teach us how to behave our selves as becomes Christians, if ever it should be our Infelicity to fall into such Circumstances) his Displeasure never betray'd his Patience; but after his dear Saviour's Example being revil'd, he revil'd not again, but being curs'd by them he bless'd them amidst his cruel Sufferings. All the Arms he us'd against his bloody Persecutors were only those so well known in the succeeding Ages of the Church, viz. Prayers and Tears. Arms not to conquer their Tyrannizing Governors, but to suffer as Martyrs, which this Day's Saint truly did in the most humble Posture, begging upon his Knees with his dying Breath, that his all-merciful Lord would not lay this Sin to their Charge; and that we may be prepar'd to follow this great Example (when thereunto called) in blessing them that curse us, doing good to them that hate us, and praying for them that despitefully use and persecute us, we cannot implore the divine Assistance in more proper Terms, than in the Words us'd by the Church in the Collect for the Day: *Grant, O Lord, that in all our Sufferings, &c.*

St.

ST. JOHN'S-DAY, Dec. 27.

THIS Feast is appointed by the Church to be kept holy in Memory of the blessed Apostle and Evangelist St. *John*, one of the Sons of *Zebedee*, Brother to St. *James* the Great (who were call'd Sons of Thunder, a Name given them, as some think, more particularly upon this Saint's account, for that remarkable Sublimity and Profoundness of Style wherein he expresses the Mystery of the Gospel) with whom he was called from the Trade of Fishing to be a Disciple of Christ. He was one of the three whom our Blessed Saviour chose to accompany him in his Retirements and Privacies; and in so peculiar a manner the Favourite of our Lord, that he was distinguish'd by the Name of *the beloved Disciple*. So remarkable was the Honour which our Blessed Saviour shewed this Day's Saint, that we find him placed next himself at the Paschal Supper; where tho' the other Apostles were desirous to know whom it was our Lord meant that should betray him, yet none of them daring presume to ask the Question, St. *Peter* put it upon this Disciple whom *Jesus* lov'd, who lean'd upon his Bosom to make the Enquiry.

And in return to these particular Favours conferr'd upon him, (to shew us an Example of Gratitude, Courage, and Constancy) tho' surpriz'd at our Saviour's sudden Apprehension, he fled at first with the rest, yet presently recollected himself, and, with a Resolution becoming a Disciple of the Cross, enter'd the high Priest's Hall, and accompanied his Lord and Master, not only through the Indignities of his tedious Tryal, but also attended him to his dolorous Crucifixion;

fixion; where he both boldly own'd his Master amidst his most cruel Enemies, and was with as affectionate a Regard own'd by his Lord in his last Agonies, where he made this Day's Saint the Guardian to the Blessed Virgin his Mother by his last Will and Testament.

By this great Example we have natural Affection, and a tender regard of aged or distressed Parents, powerfully recommended for our Imitation.

After the Death of the Blessed Mother of our Lord (which happen'd about 15 Years after our Lord's Ascension) whom he treated during her Life at his House at *Jerusalem*, with a dutiful Respect and pious Care, suitable to the Trust reposed in him by such a Testator, he took his Journey into *Asia*, (which Province fell to his Share) confirming the Gospel where he found it already planted, and preaching it where they had not hitherto receiv'd the Christian Faith, there founding many Churches of Note and Eminency.

But he was too diligent and successful in doing his Master's Business, to escape the Fury and Malice of bloody Persecutors; which he was made sensible of in the Reign of *Domitian*; being accused as an eminent Disturber and Subverter of the established Religion of the Empire, he was by the Pro-consul of *Asia* apprehended and sent bound to *Rome*, where he was condemned to be cast into a Cauldron of boiling Oyl: A barbarous Sentence agreeable enough to the cruel Temper of that bloody Prince! But tho' this Man was miraculously deliver'd by the hand of divine Providence from this exquisite (and as they thought inevitable) Death, yet (so little Effect have even Miracles upon obdurate Hearts and prejudiced Minds) the cruel Emperor's Ma-
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lice did not cease here; for when he found 'twas beyond his Power to put him to Death, that he might not however escape his Fury, he condemned him to Banishment, into a solitary uncomfortable Island called *Patmos*; where this devout Saint conversing with his God in divine Contemplations, by frequent Visions and Heavenly Representations, he had such a Prospect of the future State of the Church, as enabled him to write his divine Revelation.

After many Years spent in this Solitude he returned from his Exile, upon the succeeding Emperor's repealing several severe Acts his infamous Predecessor had made against Christians, and at his Return (which was soon after the Martyrdom of Bishop *Timothy*) he took upon him (being assisted by some other Bishops) the great Charge of the large Diocese of *Ephesus*, where he writ his holy Gospel; and in the beginning of *Trajan's* Reign departed this Life in a good old Age, being about 99 Years old when he died, who may not improperly be said to have outliv'd his own Martyrdom.

The Collect for the day refers to the Epistle (which is part of the first of his own) wherein the Apostle describes the Person of our Saviour in whom we have Eternal Life by a constant Communion with God, which is to be kept up by the Holiness of our Lives, to testify the Truth of our Profession.

In the Holy Gospel we have what before was mentioned, *viz.* this beloved Disciple's being desired by St. *Peter* to ask our Saviour who it was that should betray him: As also the Concern St. *Peter* expresseth in his desire to know what should become of this his intimate Friend (for such this day's Saint and he were, as by several Instances we find recorded of their Familiarity; as

hastning together to the Sepulchre, their going together to the Temple at the Hour of Prayer, the Miracle of healing they wrought together, their preaching to the People, and being made Prisoners at the same time by the Chief Priests and Sadducees, and their pleading their own Cause the next day before the Sanhedrim, and in this place his solicitous Enquiry what should be the Fate of his Friend) and upon our Blessed Saviour's Answer to St. *Peter's* Question, is built that commonly receiv'd Error, that this Disciple should never die; which Answer of our Saviour relates only to his coming to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, which this holy Apostle surviv'd many Years.

INNOCENTS-DAY, *Dec. 28.*

THis Festival is celebrated by the Church in Commemoration of those holy Innocents, who fell a Sacrifice (as upon this Day) to the Ambition of the cruel Tyrant *Herod*, who had newly acquir'd the Government (with the Title of King) of *Judea* from the Emperor *Augustus*. He had not been long possess'd of it, before he was surpriz'd with the Noise of the Birth of a New King of the *Jews*, and that too of the Royal Stock and Lineage of *David*, whom he was inform'd the wise Men from the *East* were come to worship by the Direction of a Star. This Rumour startled him so much, that immediately he call'd a Council of the Chief Priests and Scribes (Persons best skill'd in the Law and the Prophets) to demand of them where this young King was to be born; who all agree that (according to repeated Prophecies and Traditions)

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the Place must be *Bethlehem* of *Judaea*. *Herod* finding all Circumstances thus accord in the Birth of *Christ*, whose Title to that Crown he conceiv'd much better than his own; he thought no way so proper to secure his precarious pretended Right, as by destroying the young Prince that had a real one.

So jealous are Usurpers of Hereditary Right, that they stick at no Barbarity to prevent its taking place. This was sufficiently instanc'd in the unheard-of Massacre this day executed upon the poor holy Innocents.

Yet before he ventur'd upon this unparallell'd Cruelty, he first try'd how far the specious Pretence of Religion would serve his bloody Designs; and to this end order'd the wise Men (when they had found the Holy Child *Jesus*) to bring him word that he might go and worship him; tho' at the same time he thought of nothing less: For as a Messiah he did not value him, only under the Pretext of worshipping *Christ*, he hoped for an Opportunity to destroy the King of the *Jews*.

But no sooner found he himself mock'd and disappointed by the wise Men (who were directed by God to return home another way) but he presently pulls off the Mask of Hypocrisie, and shews himself a true *Edomite* (from which Stock he sprang) which very Name bespeaks Blood, proves his Legitimacy from the Family of *Esau* by his Inhumanity, and engrosses his Pedigree in Characters of innocent Blood.

And tho' God has peremptorily said, *Whoever sheds Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed*, yet (like *David's* Man in Prosperity) he thought himself placed in too high a Station for such Threats; and rather than endure the Thoughts of a Competitor to his Crown, resolv'd not to leave a Child living in *Bethlehem*, and all the Coasts round

round about it: Whereupon he caus'd such a barbarous Massacre upon those holy Innocent Children, as not only *Rachel*, but all *Ramah*, was filled with Lamentations; and the whole City of *Judah*, and all the adjacent Places put in deep Mourning for their butcher'd Infants; which the Greek Church computes to be in Number about 14000.

We shall not be too nice in enquiring into the Reasons, why God suffer'd so many Innocent Children to be murther'd by the hand of a bloody Tyrant: Whether it might be for the inhospitable Treatment the Blessed Virgin met with from the *Bethlehemites* at our Blessed Saviour's Birth, or for the little regard they had either to the Prophecies concerning him, or to the Message and Joy of the Shepherds, or to the Offerings and Worship they paid to the Messiah? Whether upon these Accounts God might not be graciously pleas'd to punish such obdurate Parents by taking away their Children, not only from them, but from the Miseries of a sinful Life, and the Errors of a corrupt Education, to make them the Instruments of his Glory by the Crown of Martyrdom.

The Considerations this Day's Festival recommends to us are chiefly these,

1. From *Herod's* pretending to worship Christ with a design to murder him; learn we, to take care how we cloak any wicked designs under the Pretence of Religion.

2. To be careful in the virtuous Education of our Children, lest God bereave us of them as a Punishment to us, tho' as a Blessing to them, in delivering them out of our hands from the corrupt Principles they might otherwise imbibe from wicked Parents.

3. To

3. To bear patiently whatever Afflictions God in his Mercy or Justice shall inflict upon us, even the parting with our dear Children whenever he shall think fit to make them Instruments of his Glory, tho' torn from their Mothers Breast by the hands of persecuting Tyrants.

And *Lastly*, To make us true Disciples of *Christ*, that we may become as little Children in the Frame and Temper of our Minds. Let us pray with the Church in this day's Collect, That since God has been pleas'd to ordain Strength out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, and make them glorifie him by their Deaths, that he would kill and mortifie all Vices in us, and so strengthen us with his Grace; that by the Innocency of our Lives and Constancy of our Faith, even unto Death, we may glorifie his Holy Name, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

NEW-YEARS-DAY: *Jan. 1.*

Or the CIRCUMCISION of CHRIST.

WE celebrate this Feast in Memory of our Lord's Circumcision.

As all Federal Compacts have some solemn outward Rites of Ratification, so God appointed Circumcision as the Seal of the Covenant, which he was pleas'd to enter into with *Abraham* and his Posterity, *Gen. xvii. 9, 10, 11.* God said unto *Abraham* *thou shalt keep my Covenant. This is my Covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy Seed after thee; every Man-child among you shall be circumcis'd, and ye shall circumcise the Flesh of your Foreskin, and it shall be a token of the Covenant betwixt me and you.* Which Precept was afterwards not only incorporated into the Body of the

the *Jewish* Law, and entertain'd with the highest Veneration, but rely'd on as the main Foundation of their Hopes of Acceptance with God. But as the Law was only a Shadow of good things to come, and not the very Image of the things themselves; and therefore tho' the Law came by *Moses*, yet Grace and Truth came by *Jesus Christ*. It was time for *Moses* to resign the Chair, when this Prophet came into the World. Ceremonies could be of no longer use, when the Substance appear'd, *i. e.* when the promis'd *Messiah* came into the World, whom the Apostle calls the *Mediator of a better Covenant*; who for our sakes took upon him the Curse of the Law, being made Sin for us, and becoming a Surety for us Sinners to an offended Deity, sealing the Covenant, as upon this Day, (by undergoing the cruel Rite of Circumcision) with some drops of that his most precious Blood, which he design'd to pour out whole upon the Cross, for the Redemption of Mankind.

How severe, burthensome and servile the *Mosaic* Dispensation was, is very plain to any Person that reads the State of the *Jewish* Church. As the multitude of their solemn stated times of Worship; their New Moons and Ceremonial Sabbaths; the Charges, as well as Fatigue of their tedious Journeys to *Jerusalem*, to offer their (sometimes very costly) Sacrifices; their Worships and Purifications, besides innumerable little Ceremonies (and those too commanded to be observ'd under severe Penalties) which were such heavy burthens, and so grievous to be born, that the very Apostles complain'd it was a yoke upon their Necks, which neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear: And, to add to the Severity of the Law, at their admission to be Members of the *Jewish* Church (as Christians enter

enter into Covenant with God, by the Sacrament of Baptism) their new born Infants on the eighth Day were bound to undergo the painful Ceremony of Circumcision, otherwise that Soul to be cut off from God's People; this Duty being enjoyn'd to *Abraham*, under this severe Penalty, as a Token of the Covenant made with him and his Posterity, that they might carry in their Bodies that Badge of distinction, as the Seal of their Inheritance to the Land of Promise, and a Token of their being the select People of God.

Thus our Blessed Saviour, who came not to destroy, but to fulfil the whole Law, as a Son of *Abraham* (tho' before Abraham was, he is) underwent this severe part of the Law, not only to take the heavy Yoke of the Law from off our Shoulders, and deliver us from the Severity of its Commands, but also to shew us that he came to suffer the Punishment due to our Sins, and to atone for them by his own most precious Blood.

And this being the time when they imposed names upon their Children (that the whole Ceremony might be regularly performed) the Gospel for the Day informs us, that our Blessed Lord, at his Circumcision, upon the eighth Day receiv'd the holy Name of *Jesus*, as the Angel had directed before his immaculate Conception.

And the same Angel giving this reason why he should be so call'd, *Because he was sent to save the People from their Sins.* The Apostle has enjoyn'd such a reverence to be paid to that holy Name by all Christians, that *at the Name of Jesus every Knee shall bow.*

As our Blessed Saviour then suffer'd himself, and became obedient to the Law for us, let us endeavour to make a right use of the Benefits receiv'd thereby. As,

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First,

First, Has our Blessed Saviour, by being obedient to the Ceremonial Law, freed us from the intolerable Observances thereof, and taught us to serve God in a better, more easy, manly and natural way!

Let us, in return, diligently observe the Laws and Precepts of the Gospel.

Secondly, Has our Saviour, by shedding some of his Blood (as upon this Day) for us, broken down the Partition Wall betwixt Jew and Gentile; so that now there's no distinction, neither Jew nor Greek, Male nor Female, Bond nor Free, but we are all one in *Christ Jesus*; and in every Nation, he that fears God, and works Righteousness, is accepted with him!

Let us who are thus led into the way of Truth, hold the Faith in Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteousness of Life.

Thirdly, Was our Lord, as upon this Day, call'd *Jesus*, that he might save us from our Sins!

Let us who name the Name of *Christ*, depart from Iniquity. And as we receive our Christian Names, when we enter into Covenant with God by the Sacrament of Baptism (in lieu of the painful Rite of Circumcision.) Let our Christian Names always put us in mind of our Baptismal Vow; which, that we may the better perform, let us constantly pray (as in the Collect for the Day) " That we may have the true Circumcision of the Heart, and that all our Members may be so mortify'd, from all worldly and carnal Lusts. that we may in all things obey his blessed Will, thro' the same our Lord *Jesus Christ*."

The TWELFTH-DAY.

*Being the EPIPHANY; or the Feast of the
Manifestation of CHRIST to the Gentiles,
Jan. 6.*

THE word properly signifies Appearance ; and is here more emphatically us'd for *Christ's* Appearance in the World at his Birth, and yet more particularly his Manifestation, or being made known to those wise Men of the *East*, among the Gentiles, who were famous for Learning, especially their Knowledge and Skill in Astronomy ; who observing an extraordinary Star, differing in Lustre and Magnitude from the rest in the Heavens, and concluding such a Prodigy must presage something unusual, and worth their enquiry, took a Journey to *Jerusalem* to satisfy their Curiosity : Perhaps the general Expectation the Jews had express'd about this time of the promised *Messiah*, had reach'd their Country, and probably made them the more inquisitive. In treating upon the Massacre of the holy Innocents, we have mention'd the Uneasiness *Herod* express'd, when he was inform'd of the Cause of the wise Men's coming to *Jerusalem*, from whence they proceeded on their Journey, by the direction of the same Star, which guided them directly to the Place, where (to their great Joy and Satisfaction) they found the holy Child *Jesus* wrapt up in Swathing Clothes, and lying in a Manger.

Yet, notwithstanding they found the holy Infant in this despicable Condition, these very Heathens could not but discern and acknowledge his Divinity : And, according to the Eastern Custom, where they usually bring Presents, when they make their court to their Princes, they presented him

with some of the richest Products of their Country; *i. e.* Gold (as a King) Frankincense (as a God) and Myrrhe (as a Man.) Thus these wise Men became Tributary to this Great King of the whole World, not only worshipping him with their Bodies (falling down at his Feet) but with their Substance; teaching us hereby how to address and apply our selves to God, not to presume to appear before the Lord empty, but remember that our Alms and Oblations are as necessary a Duty as our Prayers and Thanksgivings.

In those extraordinary Festivals in the Jewish Church, which lasted for several Days, the first and the last were always high Days. Thus, that we may not be less grateful than the Jews, for God's great Mercies and Deliverances, the Christian Church has always appointed some other Days to attend her high Feasts, and particularly twelve to accompany the great Festival of our Blessed Saviour's Nativity: And tho' each of 'em is kept in memory of *Christ's* Appearance in the World; yet this, being the concluding Day, is more particularly observ'd by the Church, and distinguish'd more expressly by the name of the *Epiphany*, and accordingly has proper Offices appointed for it. In Latin 'tis render'd *Epiphania*, in the plural number, because on this same Day (tho' not in the same Year) there were three Epiphanies or Manifestations of our Lord, which are mention'd in the Service for the Day. The first was his Manifestation, by the direction of the Star, which we have recorded in this Day's Gospel. The second, the Manifestation of the Glorious Trinity at our Saviour's Baptism, mention'd in the second Lesson for the Morning. The third, the Manifestation of his divine Nature, by his Miracle of turning Water into Wine, which we read in the second Lesson for the Evening.

And

And as we find, from the Nativity to the Epiphany, the Church takes care, by her Offices, to make *Christ's* Humanity, or Manifestation in the Flesh, plain and conspicuous to us; so from the *Epiphany*, to the Sunday call'd *Septuagesima*, she is as industrious in manifesting to us his Divinity, by entertaining us with the History of some of his first Miracles.

SUNDAYS *after* EPIPHANY.

THE first Sunday, we have an account of his disputing at twelve Years old, and baffling the great Jewish Doctors to that degree, that all that heard him were astonish'd at his Understanding and Answers.

In the second Sunday's Gospel, we have related the Miracle he wrought at the Marriage of *Cana* in *Galilee*, turning Water into Wine.

On the third, We read of his miraculous curing the Leper.

On the fourth, His stilling the raging of the Sea, by a word of his Mouth.

And as these four Sundays last mention'd have given us a glimpse of *Christ's* Glory, manifested in part to us, in his Miracles upon Earth; so the Offices for the fifth and sixth Sundays put us in mind of that great and terrible Day of the Lord, when he shall appear in his full Glory, and come accompany'd with his holy Angels, to judge the Quick and the Dead; and that we may be found upon our guard, and duly qualify'd to be made like unto him, when he shall thus manifest himself to us, at his second Coming in Power and great Glory, we cannot address God in more pathetical or more suitable words, than the Church has furnish'd us with, in the Collect for the last Sunday in *Epiphany*.

SEPTUAGESIMA, SEXAGESIMA, and QUIN-
QUAGESIMA-SUNDAYS.

The Third, second and last Sundays before LENT.

ONE of our most judicious Ritualists tells us, the best reason he can find out of many given for the names of these Sundays, is, in his Opinion, from the sequel of Numbers (as he calls it *à consequentia numerandi*) the first Sunday in *Lent* (or of the Forty Days Fast) being call'd *Quadragesima*, because forty Days before *Easter*, and the Sunday before that, being yet farther from *Easter*, and Five being the next number above Four, it is therefore call'd *Quinquagesima*, and the Sunday before that *Sexagesima*, and for the same reason this first is call'd *Septuagesima*. And the reason why these Sundays are thus particularly distinguish'd, is, that we may take the more notice of them, as design'd by the Church to prepare us for the exchange of our Feasting into Fasting, our Christmas for a Lent.

Thus the Church takes care gradually to wean us from those Raptures of Joy, which the welcome coming of a Saviour must needs have created in a sinking helpless People; to the intent that without surprize we may be brought calmly and deliberately to consider upon those inexpressible Agonies our blessed Redeemer submitted himself to undergo, that at length being made perfect thro' Sufferings, he might entirely compleat our Title to eternal Happiness.

We are here (as it were) call'd from *Bethlehem* to *Mount-Calvary*, not to behold the holy Child *Jesus* (whom nothing but infinite Love and Compassion to a perishing People, drew from Heaven) wrapt up in swathing Clothes, and lying in a Manger; but the King of the Jews, the
Captain

Captain of our Salvation, dragged and nailed to a Cross, and that too, even by those infamous ungrateful Wretches whom he came purely to rescue from eternal Misery: And instead of good Tidings of great Joy, our Ears are now to be entertain'd with the loud and bitter Cries of an expiring Saviour; a Voice so loud and of such force, that it rent the very Rocks: And sure the Commemoration thereof should have this effect upon our Hearts, that being brought to a due sense of our Sins, by considering their dire effects (which made the Son of God, the Joy of all Nations, cry out and die) we may repent and be converted, that our Iniquities may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord.

And to encourage us with the less uneasiness to part with these Sins, in the Epistle for *Septuagesima* the Apostle enjoins the Duties of Abstinence, Temperance and Repentance; and gives us his own example how to keep our Bodies in subjection by the Lenten Exercises of Fasting and Mortification.

As also in the Epistle for *Sexagesima*, we have a large account of the Apostles suffering for the Faith, set down as a Pattern for us to follow, if ever we should be persecuted for our Religion.

And because our Prayers, Fasting, Sufferings, and all our doings without Charity are nothing worth, we have (in the Epistle for *Quinquagesima*) that excellent Gift, the Bond of Peace, and of all Virtue, as that Days Collect terms it) most powerfully recommended by the same Apostle, which is inculcated by the Church at this time, as being a duty more particularly incumbent upon us during the holy approaching Season set apart by the Church for Fasting and Humiliation, and by us call'd,

LENT.

The Forty Days before EASTER.

THIS forty Days Fast seems to be in a manner as ancient as the Festival of the Resurrection; for in the early Ages of the Church, when the dispute was hot about the time of the observation of *Easter*; both the contending Parties agreed it to be at the end of the forty Days Fast, which they then call'd the ante-paschal Fast, by us call'd *Lent*, the old *Saxon* word for Spring.

This particular number of forty Days we find frequently used for extraordinary Humiliations, and deprecating God's Judgments. *Moses* and *Elias* fasted forty Days; the *Ninevites* had the very same space of time allow'd for their Repentance; our Blessed Saviour, when he was pleas'd for our sakes and example to afflict himself with Fasting, observ'd the same precise number of Days: In imitation whereof, and in conformity to primitive Practice, the Church still retains and enjoins a penitential Season before *Easter* consisting of the same number of Days; that so far as we are able we may suffer with our Blessed Saviour here, in order to reign with him hereafter. And as his ineffable Sufferings ended in a glorious and joyful Resurrection, so the Church concludes our *Lenten* Afflictions at *Easter*, a time of Exultation and Joy.

The Spring is a proper Season of the Year to restrain and subdue our Affections, our Blood being then in its highest Ferment, 'tis the fittest time to prepare our Souls by this Course of spiritual Physick, *i. e.* Fasting and Prayer, for that heavenly Banquet provided for our *Easter* entertainment; the Church (by her Rubrick) enjoyning all Christians,

flians on that Day to participate of the spiritual Feast of the Body and Blood of *Christ*, has therefore appointed this time of Fasting and Prayer for their Preparation, that judging themselves they may not be judged of the Lord.

As God commanded the *Israelites* to afflict themselves, and eat bitter Herbs before the Paschal Lamb; so the Church obliges us too, during the holy time of *Lent*, to employ our selves in works of Piety, Charity, Fasting, Prayer, Mortification and Penance, before we presume to come to that holy Table, to eat and drink the mystical Body and Blood of that true Paschal Lamb of God that takes away the Sins of the World.

ASHWEDNESDAY.

The First Day of LENT.

THIS being the first Day of *Lent*, and consequently a Day of more than ordinary Humiliation, pious Christians in former times were wont to cloath themselves in Sackcloth, to express their Humility and Unworthiness; and to put themselves in mind of their Mortality, and how little worthy they were to live, or rather how much they deserv'd to dye and be reduc'd to their first principles of Dust and Ashes; they were also wont to sprinkle Ashes upon their Heads; from which ancient Custom, this Day has the name of *Ashwednesday*. This, and the three following Days in this Week, are taken in to make up the number of forty Days of *Lent*; for taking out the six Sundays in *Lent* (all Sundays being Festivals) in six Weeks there remain only thirty six Days, and these four being added, make up the number of forty.

Upon this Day notorious Sinners were put to open

open Penance in a most solemn manner; the Penitents presenting themselves to the Bishop or chief Priest of the place, at the Church-doors, barefooted and cloath'd in Sackcloth, their Heads hanging down with tears in their Eyes, and all other outward expressions of a guilty Conscience, as well as demonstrations of a sorrowful and dejected Mind; then being brought into the Church, prostrate upon the ground, begging for Absolution with Tears, after singing some penitential Psalms, the Bishop or chief of the Clergy, lay hands upon them (not to absolve, but) to ratify their Penance, which was then enjoyn'd proportionable to their Crimes: Those who were guilty of Sins of a deeper dye, had the Sentence of Excommunication passed upon them, and were not admitted to Reconciliation, till after a tedious course of Penance. This was the practice in the primitive times, when the Church took this care of her Children to punish them in this World, that their Souls might be saved in the Day of the Lord. Instead of which godly Discipline (which our Church, in the beginning of this Day's Office wishes may be restor'd) the general Sentences of God's Cursing against impenitent Sinners are order'd to be read, and the People, by their *Amen*, to affirm their belief and assent that the Curse of God is due to such Sinners without Repentance. This Office is call'd Commination, upon the account of the Curses this Day denounc'd against impenitent Sinners. Then the Church proceeds with an excellent and patheticall Discourse of the nature and necessity of Repentance: And after a penitential Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, and some suitable Suffrages, the Office concludes with three devout Prayers, the last emphatically expressing the hearty Sorrow of an humble and sincere Penitent.

In the Epistle, which is taken out of the Prophet *Joel*, we have first an Exhortation to Repentance, then a solemn Fast proclaim'd, with a Litany to be us'd upon it, *Spare thy People, O Lord, &c.* Then the place order'd for the Litany Desk, or where the Priests or Ministers of the Lord should read the Litany, *viz.* in the Body of the Church, between the Porch and the Altar.

The holy Gospel is a diffuative against Hypocrisy and Covetousness, most proper for a season wholly appropriated to Works of Piety and Charity.

The Collect (which is appointed to be used all *Lent*) is an humble acknowledgment of our hearty Contrition and Sorrow for our Sins, begging Mercy and Forgiveness for the same.

SUNDAYS *in* LENT.

THE Epistle for the FIRST SUNDAY directs us how to arm our selves against Afflictions.

The Gospel gives us the History of our Saviour's Temptations, with an account of his Victory over them; first to shew us that the Devil is never more busy, than when we are employ'd in holy Exercises; Christ himself was no sooner out of the Laver of Baptism, but he finds himself in the fire of Temptations: Secondly to preserve us from despair of Conquest; if we manfully resist him in the Faith, God will send his holy Angels to minister to us, and protect us from all his Assaults: And this second Week in *Lent*, is one of those call'd,

EMBER-WEEKS.

Whereof there are four appointed to be observ'd in the Year, This the first; the second,
Whitsunweek;

Whitsunweek; the third after the fourteenth day of *September*, and the fourth after the thirteenth day of *December*. They are call'd in Latin, *Jejunia quatuor Temporum*, the stated Fasts of the four Seasons of the Year. Hereby the Church lets us understand, that Christians are no ways inferiour in their Devotions to the Jews, who observed four solemn Fasts, *Zechar. viii. 19*. Thus dedicating to God our first Fruits, by setting apart the beginning of the several Seasons to the Worship of God, and imploring his Blessing by Fasting and Prayer upon the Ordinations appointed on the Sundays following these Ember Days; these being the only times (except upon extraordinary occasions) that by the 31st Canon the Bishops are to ordain Priests and Deacons to serve in the sacred Ministry of the Church. And this solemn preparation to the Ordination of Ministers (that the Bishops may lay hands suddenly on no Man, as we pray in the Collect to be read on these days) is observ'd in imitation of the Apostles, who fasted and pray'd before they ordain'd Persons to sacred Offices by the imposition of hands.

The Days for Fasting and Prayer on this occasion, are the Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays before the ordination Sundays, and are call'd *Ember-days*, either because such times of Humiliation were accompany'd with sprinkling Ashes or Embers upon their heads, or because it was customary on those days to eat no Bread but Cakes baked under Embers, to put them in mind of their Mortality, as not knowing how soon they might be reduc'd to Ashes.

The SECOND SUNDAY in *Lent* recommends Temperance and Abstinence.

The THIRD, upon the shortness of our Life, enjoyns perseverance in well doing, and shews us the danger of a relapse.

The FOURTH, which we call *Midlent-Sunday*, was of old call'd *Dominica Refectionis*, or the Day of Refreshment; Christians being wont on that Day to take a more than ordinary Sunday's repast. Thus the Church intermixes Joy and Comfort with Sorrow and Afflictions. The Gospel entertains us with the Miracle our Saviour wrought to feed so many hungry Souls. And in many parts of this Nation (according to primitive practice) 'tis the custom still, on this Day, to feast as many of our Children as distance of place will permit; as also, Strangers and poor People, who at such times especially ought not to be forgotten.

On the FIFTH SUNDAY, (which is call'd *Passion-Sunday*) we begin to prepare for our Lord's Funeral, which the Epistle treats of, and the Gospel (as a preliminary to his Sufferings) gives an account of the reproachful Slanders the Jews threw upon him; a wicked custom (still too much practis'd) to blast the Reputation of a Man, to make way for farther Indignities upon his Person.

The SIXTH SUNDAY is call'd *Palm-Sunday*, from the Peoples cutting down Branches of Palm-Trees, and strewing their Garments in the way as our Blessed Saviour rode in Triumph from *Bethany* to *Jerusalem*, and was welcom'd by the *Hosannahs* of the Multitude. But see the unsteady temper of the common People, and how little popular Breath is to be valu'd or rely'd upon; for the same Person whom they this day unanimously acknowledge as their King with the loudest expressions
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of Joy and *Hosannas in the Highest*, in a very few days after they bawl as loud to have him crucify'd as the vilest of Malefactors, with an *away with him, away with him ; Crucifie him.*

The History of this doleful Tragedy being our Christian Entertainment for the ensuing Week (having Offices for every Day) it has acquir'd the name of the *Great Week*, the *Holy Week*, *Passion Week*, or the *Week of Fasts*; these six Days being always solemniz'd by pious Christians with greater strictness in their Devotions, and more severe Works of Repentance than the preceding ordinary time of *Lent*.

The Thursday in this Week is call'd *Maunday-Thurs*day, in Latin *Dies Mandati*, from the Command our Blessed Saviour on this day left his Disciples *to wash one anothers feet as he had done theirs.* And upon this day such Penitents as had upon *Ashwednesday* been excluded from the Church, were, upon their full and sincere Confession and Repentance, receiv'd again into the Church, and admitted to the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of *Christ*, in Commemoration of its Institution the day after he was betray'd, as the Epistle for the day mentions. The next day is call'd,

GOOD-FRIDAY.

The Friday before EASTER.

A Good and happy Day to us, insomuch as by this expiatory Sacrifice of the most precious Body and Blood of Christ, the Sins of the whole World were this day atton'd for, our eternal Redemption purchas'd, God satisfy'd, and we thereby deliver'd from the Wrath to come, and consequently is the ground of all our Joy.

But if we properly look upon our Blessed Saviour's Passion with respect to the cause of it,
then

then surely the prospect of this woful Tragedy cannot but deeply engrave those Characters of Blood upon our Hearts; since we are not call'd upon as unconcern'd Spectators to gaze upon a crucify'd Saviour, but as Accessaries to look upon *him whom we have pierced*; for 'twas our Sins that occasion'd these Wounds to be inflicted on the *Messias*.

To heighten our devout Sorrow then to a pitch (as far as we are able) suitable to the occasion, let us consider the Person that suffer'd for us, and the nature of his Sufferings.

The Person that suffer'd for us was *Jesus Christ*, the only begotten Son of God, the eternal Son of the Father, begotten before all Worlds, very God of very God, the Prince of Glory, the promis'd *Messiah*; who for us Men, and for our Salvation took our Nature upon him; and in that Nature, being still the Person he was before, purchas'd his Church with the price of his own Blood. And whilst he appear'd upon Earth, his whole Life was a continu'd Series of Sufferings, Afflictions, Persecutions, Injuries and Affronts, from his despicable Birth in a Stable to his Shameful Death upon the Cross; and this not only from his Enemies, but his Friends; he was betray'd by one Disciple, deny'd by another, deserted for some time by them all: He was accused by false Witnesses, bound, scourg'd, buffeted, and despihtfully used by the rude Soldiers, made the scorn and ridicule of the High Priest and the rest of his unjust insulting Judges; at last rabbled to Death with the Clamours of the Mob, whom nothing but his Blood would satisfie; and no Death but a Crucifixion, the most ignominious painful lingering Death they could inflict upon the most notorious Malefactors; and accordingly (as upon this day) our Blessed Saviour was nail'd to a Cross, where, after he had hung several hours, he gave up the Ghost.

And as the Sufferings of his Body were inexpressible, so the Sufferings of his Mind were unconceivable; as appears by his bitter Agonies and bloody Sweat in the Garden, when his precious Soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto Death, thrice putting up his Petition to the Father with vehemence, *that if it were possible that bitter Cup might pass from him*; and at last that horrible anguish of Spirit he so passionately expressed upon the Cross, crying out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!*

Now, when we have thus consider'd the Quality of the Person that thus suffer'd, and the Nature as well as Cause of his Sufferings; that it was we that crown'd him with Thorns, we that nail'd his Hands and his Feet, and we that pierc'd his side with a Spear; as this consideration ought to create in us the greatest Sorrow, as well as Horror and Detestation for our Sins that occasion'd it; so we can do no less, in this respect, than observe this day with the greatest strictness, as a solemn day of Fasting, and Humiliation, and Sorrow; and in commemoration of our Saviour's Passion upon this day, all the Fridays in the Year are Fasts, as the Sundays are Feasts in memory of his Resurrection.

And as upon this day our Blessed Saviour dy'd praying for his Enemies, so the Church upon this day expresses her Charity in praying for the Conversion of all Jews, Turks, Infidels, Hereticks, and all other Enemies to the Cross of *Christ*. The next day is,

EASTER-EVE.

THIS being the Vigil of the great Feast of our Saviour's Resurrection, the Church has always observ'd it with severe Fasting, even in those

those days when Saturdays were kept as Festivals) as a day of Mourning for the loss of her Saviour, who this Day lay in the Grave, and descended into the State of the Dead.

The Gospel treats of his Body's lying in the Grave: The Epistle of his descent into Hell.

The Collect prepares us for a holy and happy Death, by mortifying our corrupt Affections, as the necessary means to obtain a joyful Resurrection.

E A S T E R - D A Y :

Or the Feast of the Resurrection of CHRIST.

Being the First Sunday after the First Full Moon which happens after the One and Twentieth of March. If the Full Moon happens on a Sunday, Easter-Day is the Sunday after.

AS we read upon *Good-Friday* how Nature seem'd frighten'd into an Ecstasy at the Passion of our Lord, the Sun masking himself under a veil of thick Clouds, the day as ashamed of the Fact leaving the World in Darkness, the veil of the Temple rent, and the hard Rocks split in sunder; so upon *Easter-Day* we find astonish'd Nature return to her Senses, the Sun throws off his dark Mantle, and chearfully rises with the Sun of Righteousness; the bashful day returns with Joy, because a better Light was come into the World; the holy Apostles who wept and lamented for the Loss of their Master, begin now to rejoyce; their Grief and Sorrow for his Death is this day turn'd into Joy and Gladness upon the news of his glorious Resurrection, whereby the last finishing stroke was given by an Almighty Hand to the great Work
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of our Redemption, which makes this day the highest (as it is the ancientest) of all Feasts. Upon this day our Blessed Saviour not only triumph'd over Death and the Grave, but by becoming the *first Fruits of them that rose from the Dead*, open'd to us the Gate of eternal Life; thus his Resurrection was our Life, for if *Christ* had not risen, we had still lain in our Sins; and in vain had he dy'd for us, if he had not risen again for our Justification.

As this days Solemnity has always been hitherto religiously observ'd, so the Church by her Offices for this Festival, has made provision, that this marvellous Work of our Redemption may be had in everlasting remembrance.

Instead of the Morning Invitatory Psalm, *O Come, let us sing unto the Lord, &c.* the Church has appointed three special Hymns to be read or sung, referring to the Resurrection.

First, As we have an Altar (whereof they have no right to partake who serve the Tabernacle, and) to which we must bring all our Sacrifices, so we have a Passover too; for, *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*; and the Church not only enjoins us to observe the Feast, but directs us how to keep it, *not with the leaven of Malice and Wickedness, but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth.*

In the second and third Hymns (which the Church borrows also from the same Apostle *St. Paul*) we not only call to mind the History of our Saviour's Resurrection, but also celebrate the Mystery of our own: And the Apostles reasoning is no less prevalent than comfortable; our Head is risen, therefore the Members shall not be left behind; our Captain hath conquer'd, therefore his Souldiers shall not be made Captives; the first Fruits are gather'd, therefore the Harvest shall not be neglected; our Nature hath put on Immortality in him that took it upon him, therefore none

that partake of this Nature shall be lost in Death; but as *Christ* this Day rais'd himself from Death to Life, so by *Christ* and the Virtue of his Resurrection shall we be made alive, and rise again from Death to Life Eternal. *Christ* submitted to Man's Punishment, that he might deliver Man from it; he could reap no advantage to himself by rising again, who enjoy'd the Perfection of Bliss before; neither had he sustain'd any loss by suffering that Body to moulder in the Grave, which rather eclips'd than added to his Glory.

The proper Psalms both for Morning and Evening are a continu'd triumphant Song of Thanksgiving for Victory and Deliverance, particularly suited to the miraculous Work of the Resurrection.

The first Lessons for Morning and Evening, entertain us with the Types of this day; in that for the Morning, we have the Institution of the Passover! in that for the Evening, we have the *Israelites* Deliverance out of *Ægypt*.

The second Lesson for the Morning teaches us what use we are to make of the Mercies of this day, that like as *Christ* was this day raised from the dead by the Glory of the Father, so we also should make it a Resurrection to Newness of Life, that Sin may have no more dominion over us.

The second Lesson for the Evening gives us a relation of *St. Peter's* bold Defence of this great Article of our Faith, with the convincing Arguments he made use of to prove it, and the good Effect it had upon the obstinate Jews; for they gladly receiving his Word, were baptiz'd, and the same day were added to the Church 3000 Souls.

The holy Gospel gives us a full History of the Resurrection: The Collect teaches us how to pray for Grace (that we may make that use of it which the Epistle directs) so to set our Affections on things above, and not on the Earth, that *when*

Christ our Life shall appear, we may also appear with him in Glory.

As all high Festivals have some other Days to attend them, so the Church shews her Intention to have this whole ensuing Week to be kept holy, by appointing the same Collect and Preface in the Communion Service to be used till the Octave or eighth day.

The Gospels for Easter Monday and Tuesday, give us farther proofs of the Resurrection, the method he took to solve the Doubts of his diffident Apostle St. Thomas, with some of the most remarkable Passages that occur'd betwixt him and his Apostles, whilst he convers'd with them upon Earth after his Resurrection.

On the Octave or eighth day (the Sunday after Easter, call'd also Low-Sunday in respect of the high Feast that went before it) the holy Gospel concludes with that blessed Valediction our Saviour gave to his Apostles, by entrusting them and their Successors for ever (the Bishops and Pastors of his Church) with the Power of the Keys, in that ample Commission he then bestow'd upon them, in these words, *As my Father sent me, even so send I you*; and when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said, *Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose soever Sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose soever Sins ye retain they are retained.*

Farther we may observe, that as other great Festivals are only continu'd till the Octave or eighth day (except Christmas till the twelfth) yet this great day was so highly esteem'd of old, that it was in a manner solemniz'd as a continued Feast for fifty days (*i. e.*) from Easter to Whitsunday, till towards the middle of the fifth Century, an Italian Bishop (upon the prospect of some Calamity that threaten'd his Diocess) order'd three days of Fasting and Humiliation before the day of our Lord's

Ascen-

Ascension; which three days were afterwards approved by a General Council, and then appointed to be yearly observ'd by the Church, from whence that Week still retains the name of

ROGATION-WEEK.

The Sixth after EASTER.

AND it is so call'd from the Rogations or Litanies and extraordinary Supplications, which (with Fasting) were at this time offer'd up to God by devout Christians; not only to prepare us for the due Celebration of the approaching Feast of our Lord's Ascension, but also to implore God's Blessing upon the Fruits of the Earth (which at this time of the Year being tender are easily hurt) and by fervent Prayers to appease God's Wrath and deprecate his Displeasure.

The usual Processions on these days having been much abused, our Church has reduced them to this Method: The Minister or Curate of every Parish, with some substantial Parishioners, are to walk about the Parishes on these days, carefully to observe the Districts or Precincts thereof, thereby to prevent Law-Suits, and the interfering with, or translating their Neighbours Bounds. And in these Perambulations the Curate is obliged to give God Thanks for the Increase and Abundance of the Fruits upon the face of the Earth, singing or reading the hundred and third Psalm, and at the same time to put them in mind of the great Sin of invading their Neighbour's Property, by inculcating these or the like Sentences, *Cursed be he that translates the Bounds and Doles of his Neighbour: Cursed be he that removes his Neighbours Land-mark, &c.*

ASCEN-

ASCENSION-DAY.

Forty Days after EASTER.

THIS day is celebrated in Commemoration of our Blessed Saviour's ascending or being taken up into Heaven in his humane Nature, and sitting at the right hand of God, above all Angels, Arch-Angels, Principalities and Powers. This day he perfected his Triumph over the Devil, led Captivity captive, and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers, that they might come boldly to the Throne of Grace, not doubting (upon their sincere Repentance) to obtain Mercy and Help in time of Need, having the perpetual Intercessions of such a prevalent Advocate at the right hand of God; such a High Priest as is touch'd with a sense of our Infirmities, continually offering up for us our Christian Sacrifices of Prayer and Thanksgiving to our Father who is in Heaven.

The proper Psalms for this day are generally Songs of Thanksgiving and Deliverance, peculiarly alluding to the occasion of the Festival.

The first Lesson for the Morning relates to us *Moses's* going up into the Mount to receive the Law from God, that he might deliver it to the Jews, a Type of *Christ's* Ascension into Heaven to send down the new Law, the Law of Faith; for, saith the Apostle, *when he ascended up into Heaven, he gave Gifts to Men, Apostles, Pastors and Teachers*, to publish his new Law to the World.

In the first Lesson for the Evening, we read of *Elias's* ascending into Heaven, as another Type of *Christ's* Ascension, tho' this far exceeds its Type; for *Elias* ascended only with a single Chariot, but *the Chariots of God are Twenty Thousands, even Thousands of Angels*, and our Lord ascends among them: *Elias* at his Ascension bestows a double portion

portion of his Spirit upon *Elisba*, but our Blessed Saviour breaths forth his Spirit so abundantly upon his Apostles at his Ascension, that they were not only plentifully fill'd with it themselves, but gave them power also to impart it to others by the Imposition of their Hands.

And as in these Lessons we have the Type of the Ascension, so in the Epistle and Gospel we have a full account how this Ascension was performed. Whilst he was discoursing with his Disciples and blessing them, he was taken up in a bright Cloud into Heaven; and whilst they stood stedfastly looking after him, till he was out of their sight, two Angels appear'd to them, assuring them that the *same Jesus whom they saw thus taken up into Heaven, should in like manner return with Glory to judge the World.*

And in the Collect we are taught (not to stand gazing up into Heaven, and wonder at the sight, but) so to conform our selves to our Lord in his Ascension, that as we believe him to have ascended into Heaven to prepare a place for us, we may also in our Hearts and Minds so ascend thither, that we may dwell with him continually, and reign with him in Glory.

This is another of the high Feasts which has its Octave or eight days to attend it, as appears by the Preface or Hymn in the Communion Service, appointed to be used that day and seven days after.

WHITSUNDAY:

Or, the Descent of the HOLY GHOST.

Seven Weeks after Easter.

THIS day the Church celebrates upon the account of the miraculous Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles (as upon this day) in the
visible

visible Shape of fiery cloven Tongues. With us it is call'd *Whitsunday* or *White Sunday*, either upon the account of that glorious Light this day sent down from Heaven upon Earth, or because on this day the new baptiz'd Christians (of old call'd *Illuminati* or *Enlightned*, from that spiritual Light they receiv'd in Baptism) were wont to be cloath'd in white Garments as an Emblem of their Innocency upon their Regeneration; and in token of their Joy upon their being by Baptism made *Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*; and of these there were great numbers at this Feast, this being one of the stated times of publick Baptism, either from the Apostles themselves being this day baptiz'd with the Holy Ghost and with Fire, or from their baptizing and adding to the Church upon this day three thousand Souls. This day still retains the name of *Pentecost* in the Latin Church, the name of that Feast observ'd by the Jews fifty days after the Passover, in memory of the promulgation of the Law at Mount Sinai; thus fifty days after the true Passover *Christ* was sacrific'd for us, the Holy Ghost descended upon the Church, to write the new Law of Charity in our Hearts. Thus the Old and New Testament agree to confirm the sacred Truth of God.

The proper Psalms for the Morning are Songs of Thanksgiving for the Calling in, and Conversion of the Gentiles. The Evening Psalms are a thankful Commemoration and grateful Praises for the mighty Power and wonderful Providence of God.

In the first Lesson we have an account of the *Jewish Pentecost, or Feast of Weeks*, in type of ours.

In the second Lessons we read how miraculously the Gift of the Holy Ghost was communicated by the Discourses of *St. Peter*, and the laying on the Hands of *St. Paul*. The

The Collect teaches us to implore God's assistance in all our undertakings, that having our Understandings illuminated by the Light of his Holy Spirit, we may have a right Judgment in all things, and evermore rejoyce in his holy Comfort, &c.

According to the Promise mention'd in the Gospel, of *sending the Comforter*, the Epistle gives us an ample relation of the Circumstances of the descent of the Holy Ghost; as 1st, When it came, on the day of *Pentecost*. 2^{dly}, How it found them when it came, all with one accord in one place. 3^{dly}, From whence it came, from Heaven. 4^{thly}, In what manner it came, *with a great sound, as of a mighty rushing Wind, which fill'd the House where they were sitting*. 5^{thly}, In what shape it came, *It sat upon each of them in the appearance of cloven Tongues like as of Fire*. And lastly, The effect it had upon them, *They immediately began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*. Thus these illiterate Men who were born Jews (and at best understood only their mother Tongue) were enabled in an instant to speak in all Languages the wonderful Works of God, and to publish, preach and defend the Christian Religion all the World over. Thus by this miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost we were brought out of Darkeness and Error into the true Light and Knowledge of *Christ*, as the Church observes in the Preface for the Communion Service; which, tho' it be continued till *Trinity-Sunday*, and thereby seems to design the whole Week a Festival, yet the Feast concluded with the two following days, the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday following being Ember Days for this Season before *Trinity-Sunday*, which is one of the stated times for Ordination.

TRINITY-SUNDAY :
Eight Weeks after EASTER.

WE this day celebrate the Mystery of the holy ever-blessed and glorious Trinity, *i. e.* one God in three distinct Persons, *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*

The Church for some time satisfy'd her self with celebrating the Praises of the glorious Trinity every day (especially on Sundays) in her Doxologies, Hymns and Creeds, without setting apart any particular Feast for solemnizing that blessed Mystery; but upon the *Arians* and such like Hereticks venting their Blasphemies against the holy Trinity, the Church thought it proper that such a divine Mystery (tho' part of each day's Meditation) should be the principal Subject of one particular day: And this was the day appointed, because the Church having celebrated in admirable Order all the high Feasts relating to our Blessed Saviour, as also the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles (which gave a clearer light to the notion of the incomprehensible Trinity than the World had before) thought she could not more properly conclude these high Solemnities, than by a Festival with special and exprefs Service, relating to the glorious Trinity.

In the first Lesson for the Evening we have a Type of the mysterious Trinity in Unity, in the account we there have of the Lord's appearing to *Abraham* in three Persons.

In the second Lesson for the Morning we have the mystery of the Trinity represented to us in the History of our Blessed Saviour's Baptism, *viz.* The Son baptized, the Holy Ghost descending upon him, and the Father proclaiming him by a Voice from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.*

The

The Epistle, taken out of the Revelation of St. *John*, gives a relation of that Vision wherein he beheld the Throne of God and the holy Angels throwing down their Crowns, and worshipping the eternal Trinity in that divine Hymn, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.*

The holy Gospel entertains us with the Conference our Blessed Saviour had with *Nicodemus* concerning Baptism and the Gifts of the Holy Ghost: And as nothing brings so much light and clearness to the Doctrine of the holy Trinity, as a true and right apprehension of the Mission of the Holy Ghost, so no Meditation can be so proper for this day, either as the day on which we celebrate the divine Mystery of the holy Trinity, or as it is appointed one of the four stated solemn days of Ordination or Consecrating Persons for spiritual Offices.

Thus the Church having by a due Celebration of these high Festivals confirm'd the Articles of our Creed relating to the great Mystery of our Redemption by *Christ* on Earth, till he ascended into Heaven, with the descent of the Holy Ghost, and concluded these Solemnities with special regard to, and extraordinary adoration of the Blessed Trinity, she takes care, (during the interval of these high Feasts from *Trinity-Sunday* to *Advent*) to entertain us with such portions of Scripture in the Lessons, Epistles and Gospels, as may tend most to our Edification, thereby constantly putting us in mind of our Christian Duties, that we may be Heavenly-minded, Just and Charitable, Meek and Merciful, Penitent and Humble, Resign'd, Religious and Thankful, still putting our Trust and Confidence in God's Mercy, and abounding with such spiritual Qualifications, that we may be ready and prepar'd, not only rightly to solemnize the ensuing Feast of our Blessed Saviour's Advent or

Coming in the Flesh, but to meet with Joy his second Coming to judge the World.

St. ANDREW'S-DAY, Nov. 30.

THIS is the first Saint's day the Church celebrates, which ushers in the Advent of our Lord, he being the first Apostle that came to *Christ*, and went immediately to his Brother *Simon Peter*, to tell him the joyful News, *that he had found the Messias*, and brought him next day to our Lord.

This Apostle was born at *Bethsaida* a City in *Galilee*, the same Country where our Saviour was conceiv'd and brought up, the place afterwards of his ordinary residence, and the chief scene of his Ministry; here he began his Miracles, here he was transfigur'd, and appointed his Disciples to come and see him after his Resurrection.

He was Son to *John* or *Jonas* a Fisherman, which trade he followed with his Father, till such time as our Blessed Saviour call'd him from catching Fish to be a *Fisher of Men*.

And having been for some time before a Disciple to St. *John* the Baptist, and by him train'd up under the Discipline of Repentance, and prepar'd by his Discourses concerning the Doctrine and Approach of the *Messias*, he readily obey'd the divine Call, *left all, and followed him*.

After our Blessed Saviour's Ascension, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles (in order to execute the great Commission they had receiv'd from their Master) agreed among themselves (perhaps by the direction of the Holy Ghost) to take their several Districts, the better to propagate the Christian Faith, root out Prophaneness and Idolatry, and subdue the World to the Doctrine of the Gospel.

In this division *Scythia* and the Neighbouring Countries fell to St. *Andrew's* Share, where by his unwearied Diligence and pious Example he planted the Gospel in several places, converting and baptizing great numbers; and tho' all along he met with great Difficulties, Dangers and Discouragements, yet he overcame them all with invincible Patience and Resolution: At last at *Patrae* in *Achaia* he seal'd the Truth of his Doctrine with his Blood, where he had the success (among many others) to convert the Pro-Consul's Brother, and *Maximilla* a Lady of great Quality, who took care afterwards to have his martyr'd Body embalm'd and decently interr'd (whom some will have to be the Pro-Consul's Wife.) This so far enrag'd that bigotted cruel Idolater, that nothing less than the Blood of this holy Man could satiate the thirst of his Malice; whom, after seven Lictors had (by his order) successively whipp'd his naked Body, without making any shock upon his Patience and Constancy, he commanded to be crucify'd; and that his Death might be the more lingering, he was fastened with Cords instead of Nails to two pieces of Timber crossing each other in the form of the Letter X, usually known since by the name of St. *Andrew's* Cross. He not only shew'd a chearful and compos'd Mind as they led him to Execution, but when he came to the Cross he express'd as much readiness to follow his Master to *Golgotha* as he did when he follow'd him into *Galilee*, and as great Satisfaction and Joy in having the honour to be convey'd to his Lord upon the same Instrument which he had consecrated by performing the great Work of his Redemption upon it.

The Epistle enjoyns the Confession of the Christian Faith, and particularly the Belief of the Article of the Resurrection as the only necessary means of Salvation. And as the Apostle argues the Im-

possibility of believing in him of whom we have not heard, and of hearing without a Preacher: Our Blessed Saviour, to remove any such Objections, gave Commission to Twelve (whom he nam'd Apostles or Messengers, for so the word signifies, who were also Witnesses of his Miracles and Resurrection) to preach to the World the glad Tidings of the Gospel of Peace; of which number was the holy Apostle St. Andrew, who upon the last day of November obtain'd the Crown of Martyrdom for his Fidelity and Diligence in executing his Master's Orders.

From the holy Gospel, which gives an account of this day's Saint's readiness to leave all and follow Christ, we are instructed to suffer no worldly Consideration to come in competition with our Religion: And from this Apostle's readiness to call his Brother to see the *Messias*, we learn how much it is our Duty to do all the good Offices we can amongst our Friends and Relations, both by persuasion and example, to make them Followers of Jesus Christ.

And that we and all Christians may imitate this day's Saint in preferring Christ and his Religion before the things of this World, and readily obeying his Call, the Church teaches us to pray (in the Collect) "That being call'd by his holy Word, we may forthwith give up our selves obediently to fulfill his holy Commandments". The Eve before this day is a Fast.

St. THOMAS the Apostle, Dec. 21.

THE Church celebrates this Festival, in Commemoration of the Martyrdom of the Apostle St. Thomas, who is also called *Didymus*, a name of the same importance in the Greek as the other

other was in the Jewish Language, both signifying a Twin. It being customary with the Jews when they went into foreign Countries to assume a Greek or Latin Name of near affinity and signification with that of their own Country.

This Apostle is thought to be born of mean and obscure Parents, and by all concluded to be a Jew, tho' the Scripture makes no mention either of his Birth or Country: His Trade we find that of a Fisherman by his accompanying St. *Peter* in that Occupation, who for some time after our Saviour's Resurrection return'd to his former Trade.

Soon after his being call'd with the rest to the Apostleship, he gave a signal Instance of his hearty willingness to adhere to our Saviour whatever Fate might attend him; for upon our Blessed Saviour's declaring his resolution to return to *Judaea*, to raise his Friend *Lazarus* from the dead, when the rest of the Disciples dissuaded him from so hazardous a Journey for fear of the Jews who had a little before attempted to stone him; this Apostle (with a Courage truly becoming a Disciple of the Cross) not only shews his own readiness to accompany his Master thro' the greatest Dangers, but presses it upon the rest as a Duty incumbent upon them to follow their Lord, tho' at the same time instead of raising *Lazarus* from the dead they should with him be sent to their own Graves, saying, *Let us also go that we may dye with him.*

And tho' we find him neither quick in apprehending our Saviour's Discourses, nor forward in believing more than he saw, yet he made up those defects by his pious Affections. As to his slowness of apprehension, we find him mightily puzzled to know what our Saviour meant, when a little before his Passion discoursing of the Joys of Heaven, he told them *he was going to prepare the way that they might follow him*, and that *they knew both*

the place and the way: Thomas said unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how should we know the way? Our Saviour presently clears his Understanding in a short but satisfactory Reply, which he deliver'd with a mildness adapted to a well-dispos'd mind, telling him himself was the true living way, and that none could miss of Heaven if they kept but to that way which he had prescribed.

As to his diffidence we have an eminent Instance of it after our Saviour's Resurrection; for being absent when *Christ* first manifested himself to his Apostles, tho' at his return they gave him a Relation of the Circumstances of his appearing to them, yet so obstinate was he that nothing would satisfy him but the testimony of his Senses, *Except (saith he) I see in his Hands the print of the Nail, and thrust my Hand into his side, I will not believe.* But our Blessed Saviour (who would not reject this chosen Vessel) was so far from taking any advantage at his Infidelity, that in Compassion to his weakness, as also to satisfy the doubts and scruples of a sincere (tho' ignorant) Man, he came again the first day of the following Week as they were solemnly met at their Devotions; and *St. Thomas* being with them, he called him to satisfy his Faith by a demonstration of sense, *Reach hither thy Finger and behold my Hands, and reach hither thy Hand and put it into my side, and be not faithless but believing.* The good Man being quickly convinc'd of his Error burst out into a Rapture, at once expressing his Sorrow for his Unbelief, and his Joy for the cause of his Conviction; and *Thomas* answer'd and said, *My Lord and my God.* The meek *Jesus* gave him no harsher reply than this, only told him, *that it was well for him that he believ'd his Senses,* but withal that it was a more generous act of Faith for a Man to acquiesce in a rational Evidence of the truth of the Gospel, tho'

tho' he did not see the things there related with his Eyes.

The Province assign'd to this Apostle after our Lord's Ascension was *Parthia*; and after he had preach'd the glad Tidings of Salvation to the *Medes* and *Persians*, and other neighbouring Nations, he at last passed through the *Asian Æthiopia* into the *Indies*, and in his Travels is said to have met with the *Magi* or Wise Men of the *East* (who brought Presents to our new born Saviour) and not only to have converted and baptized several of them, but to have made use of some of them as his Assistants in propagating the Gospel.

Being come to the *Indies*, notwithstanding he found their Manners rude and untractable, yet thro' the assistance of the divine Presence, and by mild perswasions, without running into any furious heats against their Idolatry, calmly instructing them in the *Principles of the Christian Religion*, he prevail'd upon great numbers of that barbarous People to renounce their Follies and become his Converts, and amongst the rest the Prince of the Country; whereupon the *Brachmans*, who found this new Doctrine would presently spoil their Trade and prevail against the Religion of their Country, resolv'd to put a stop to its farther progress, by putting a speedy period to this holy Apostle's Life: And accordingly pursuing him to a place he frequented for his private Devotions, whilst he was intent upon his Prayers they attack'd him with a whole Volley of Darts and Stones; at last one more mercifully cruel than the rest, put an end to his lingering Death by running him thro' with a Launce. His mangled Body was taken up and interr'd in a Church he had lately built in the chief City of that Country.

This blessed Apostle had so great success in the *Eastern India*, that we are told when the *Portuguese*

guese first arrived there they found no less than sixteen or seventeen Thousand Families, who still went by the name of *St. Thomas's* Christians. Of their Customs and Discipline the learned *Dr. Cave* gives a large account in the Life of this Apostle.

The Epistle elevates our Thoughts above earthly Things, by putting us in mind of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, whereof the Apostle tells us *we are fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God, &c.*

The holy Gospel gives us the History of this Apostle's Infidelity, and the method our Blessed Saviour took to satisfy him in the Article of the Resurrection.

The Collect gives the reason why *Christ* suffer'd this day's Saint to be doubtful in that Article, *viz. for the more confirmation of the Faith.* The Eve before this day is a Fast.

The Conversion of St. PAUL, Jan. 25.

THE Church observes this Festival in commemoration of the miraculous Conversion of the great Apostle of the Gentiles *St. Paul*, in imitation of that Joy the Saints express in Heaven at the Conversion of a Sinner. Here we see the good effect of the fervent Prayer of the faithful Martyr *St. Stephen* for his Murtherers. For when his innocent Blood was shed, this very Person was not only consenting to it, but tho' he would not be seen to be an Actor in that barbarous Tragedy among the rude Multitude, yet he was so zealous to see that good Man dispatch'd, that he took care of the Clothes of them that slew him till the work was over; which was the rise and beginning of a violent Persecution which miserably afflicted and scattered

scattered the Christians at *Jerusalem*; in which this day's Saint was then a principal Agent, making *havock of the Church with an ungovernable Zeal, entering rudely into every House, hailing both Men and Women, beating them in the Synagogues, compelling many to blaspheme, imprisoning others, and putting them to Death.* But the great City of *Jerusalem* being too narrow for his unbounded Malice, this bloody Inquisitor procured a Commission to go and ransack the Synagogues at *Damascus* (whither many of the persecuted Christians were fled for shelter) to bring up such Christians as he found there to be sentenc'd and executed at *Jerusalem*. But God (who had separated him from his Mother's Womb for a work of another nature) stopp'd him in his Career before he got to the end of his Journey: For as he was travelling, not far from *Damascus*, both he and all his Company were confounded by a sudden Light (beyond that of the Sun) darted from Heaven upon them; whereat they all fell to the ground, hearing at the same time a confused Sound, tho' none of them could distinguish the articulate Voice except himself, to whom the Voice directed these words, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me!* To which he reply'd, *Who art thou Lord!* Who told him, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.* The farther particulars are set down at large in the second Lessons and the Epistle for the day.

It may not be amiss to enquire a little who this Saint was to whom God was pleas'd to shew so particular a regard in his wonderful Conversion, and what became of him after he was thus converted.

He was born at *Tarsus* the chief City of *Cilicia*, a place invested with the Privileges, Honours and Immunities of the City of *Rome* by a Grant from *Cæsar*; and 'twas with respect to this that St. Paul asserted

asserted the Privileges of his Birthright as a *Roman*. His Parents were originally of the ancient stock of the Jews, whence he calls himself an *Hebrew of the Hebrews*. He had two names referring to his Jewish and Roman Capacity. *Saul* was a common name given Children at their Circumcision in memory of the first King of *Israel* of that name. The other name *Paul* some will have that he took it from *Sergius Paulus* his Convert; but most think he assum'd it after his own Conversion to denote his Humility.

After he had been well-instructed in the liberal Arts and Sciences at *Tarsus*, he was sent by his Parents to *Jerusalem* to be perfected in the Study of the Law under the Discipline of the great Doctor of that Profession *Gamaliel*, a Man of Eminency and Authority as well as Wisdom and Prudence. As to his Religion, he was brought up a Pharisee, the strictest Sect in the Jewish Church, who could endure no opposites, especially if the Opinions seem'd late or novel: And he being become a great Bigot thro' the prejudice of Education, as well as naturally of an active zealous temper, they could not pitch upon a more fit Person to put their cruel designs against the Christians in execution; which he had still gone on to do with as much heat as their malice could suggest, if his Commission had not been happily superseded by an over-ruling Power.

Here we cannot but adore the wonderful Providence of God, in that we find a notorious Persecutor of the Christian Faith in an instant become in an extraordinary manner an Apostle of *Jesus Christ*, and an indefatigable Preacher, as well as a bold Asserter of the Truths of the Gospel, not to the Jews only, but to the Heathen World. And whereas other Apostles had only their peculiar Provinces, he had committed to him the care of all the Churches.

In the *Acts of the Apostles* we have a large account how faithfully he discharged his trust; what long and hazardous Journeys he took; what Scourges and Imprisonments he underwent; what Miracles he wrought, as well as how wonderfully he was deliver'd both from Prisons and Shipwreck; and maugre all these difficulties, with what unwearied pains and undaunted resolution he both preach'd and defended the Gospel before Heathen Princes and Governors as well as the Jewish. In the farther defence whereof he wrote his learned Epistles to confirm the Faith in the Churches he had establish'd all over the Western parts of the World as far as the British Islands: Thus persevering in the *Good fight of Faith* till he had *finish'd his Course* by obtaining the Crown of Martyrdom, being beheaded by *Nero* in the 68th Year of his Age. Some say he brought upon himself the fury and hatred of that bloody Tyrant by converting one of his Concubines: Others say, by joyning, in procuring the fall of *Simon Magus*, with *St. Peter* who is likewise said to have suffered the same day at the same place, and for the same Cause. Thus as in their Lives they were *pleasant* and lovely, so in their Deaths they were not divided.

The two second Lessons and the Epistle are a repetition of the History of this Apostle's miraculous Conversion.

In the holy Gospel we have our Blessed Saviour's Promise of a reward to such as have the Courage and Resolution to *leave all and follow him*, i. e. those who *fear not them who can only kill the Body*, but dare suffer Persecution for the sake of Religion and a good Conscience.

The Collect is a thankful remembrance of this Apostle's wonderful Conversion, wherein we are also taught to pray for Grace to follow the holy Doctrine which he taught.

CANDLEMAS-

CANDLEMAS-DAY.

*The Presentation of CHRIST in the Temple,
commonly call'd, The Purification of St.
MARY the Virgin, Feb. 2.*

WE solemnize this Festival upon a twofold account, partly in memory of the Blessed Virgin's Purification, a Ceremony which she observed merely in obedience to the Law, having no other occasion for it, her immaculate Conception being without *Sin*, and the holy Birth without *Iniquity*; whereas the Rite of Purification was enjoyn'd to shew that our Birth is impure, and that we are rendered naturally unclean by the hereditary Pollution we derive from the Sin of our Parents; whereupon the Child was not only circumcis'd on the eighth day, but the Mother after thirty two days more were expired, which made up the number of forty days, was cleansed by a Sacrifice for Sin; and so long were Women by the Levitical Law obliged to separate themselves from the publick Congregation after the Birth of a male Child, and then they brought their Offerings, the richer sort a Lamb for a Burnt-Offering, and a Pigeon for a Sin-Offering; but two Turtles or young Pigeons were accepted for both from the poorer sort, which the Priest offered before the Lord and made an atonement for them. But chiefly this Feast is celebrated in memory of the presentation of our Lord in the Temple, that being another Rite required by the Law, that *every Child that opened the Womb should be holy to the Lord*: For upon God's exempting the *Hebrew Children* from the Fate of the *Egyptians* when he destroy'd their first-born, he commanded the first-born of the *Israelites* either to be dedicated to him for the use of

of the Tabernacle, or redeemed at a certain price, till such time as the Levites were substituted in their stead by God's own particular direction. Yet still so far the Custom prevail'd, that Mothers were oblig'd to present their first-born in the Temple, and pay a ransom to the Priest.

In obedience to which Law or Custom, and to teach us that things in themselves indifferent (so long as they are not sinful) ought to be obey'd when enjoyn'd by publick Authority, the Blessed Virgin here express'd her Humility, Obedience and Reverence to publick Sanctions; and of this we have a large account in the Gospel for the day.

First, We have the time set down when our Saviour was presented; when the forty days of the Blessed Virgin's Purification were accomplished, *they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.*

Secondly, We have the reason of their so doing, *viz. to satisfie the Law, as it is written in the Law of the Lord.*

Thirdly, We have an account of the Offerings the Blessed Virgin made, which were the Offerings of the poor, *viz. a pair of Turtle Doves or two young Pigeons.* Such mean Circumstances did our Blessed Saviour make choice of when he came into the World to save Sinners; *for our sakes he became poor, that we through his Poverty might be made rich.* And,

Fourthly, By this presentation of our Lord in the Temple, that devout and just Man, good old Simeon (who waited for the Consolation of Israel, and had receiv'd a promise, that he should not see Death before he had seen the Lord's Christ) and also the pious Prophetess Anna (who constantly attended the Service of the Temple with Fasting and Prayer) had both of them an opportunity to make a publick declaration of Christ to all that looked for Redemption in Israel.

From

From the observation of this Festival learn we, *First*, To be obedient to all lawful Authority in indifferent matters, and willingly to pay all our Offerings and Oblations and other customary duties enjoyn'd either by Church or State.

Secondly, Tho' we cannot see our Saviour with our bodily Eyes as old *Simeon* did, yet that we must never expect to dye in Peace, till we have embraced our Saviour with our Understanding and Affections. To this end therefore let us according to the example of the Prophetess *Anna*, constantly attend the Ordinances of our Religion, and there pray as the Collect for the day teaches us, *that we may with pure and clean Hearts be presented to the Lord.*

St. MATTHIAS'S - DAY, Feb. 24.

THIS day is kept holy in commemoration of the Martyrdom of *St. Matthias*, who not being immediately call'd to the Apostleship by our Saviour, the Scripture gives us no farther particular Remarks concerning him than what we read in the Epistle for the day, wherein we have an account of the occasion why, and a relation how he was chosen into the Apostleship, to make up that number of Twelve which our Blessed Saviour had pitch'd upon to plant the Christian Faith throughout the World, govern the Church at present, and by their prudent Settlement of Affairs, make provision for future Emergencies that might befall it in succeeding Ages.

The number of Twelve may probably allude to the same number of Patriarchs of the Jewish Tribes, or the twelve Rulers or Heads of those Tribes; to which conjecture our Saviour seems to give some colour and countenance, by telling them *when the Son of Man should sit on his Throne*

of Glory, *they should also sit on twelve Thrones to judge the twelve Tribes of Israel.*

First we have in the Epistle the occasion of the Vacancy; *Judas Iscariot*, one of the Twelve, who was immediately call'd by our Lord, and equally impower'd and commission'd with the rest to preach and work Miracles, was numbered with them, and had obtain'd part of their Ministry, yet all this time was a Man of base Principles and corrupt Designs; for tho' he preach'd (no doubt) with as much Zeal, and with (perhaps) as much Success too as any of them; yet all along his vile Soul was so actuated with the sordid love of Money (a Vice ill-becoming any Man, much worse a Churchman) that neither the Miracles, Sermons, Favours nor familiar Converse with our Saviour could secure him from Apostacy: This covetous temper as it first betray'd him to the basest of Actions, so at last it brought him to as desperate and fatal an end; for having treacherously and ungratefully betray'd his Master (for the lucre of thirty pieces of Silver) into the hands of those whom he knew would treat him with the highest Instances of Ignominy and Cruelty, his guilty Conscience became presently so troublesom and uneasy to him (*For a wounded Spirit who can bear?*) that seized with horror for his wicked Fact (when he had, with sorrow and indignation, thrown back that price of Blood, his wages of Iniquity in open Court) vainly hoping perhaps to find that rest in another World which he found he could not enjoy in this, *he departed and went and hanged himself, and falling down burst asunder, and his Bowels gush'd out.*

A vacancy thus happening in the Apostolick College, *St. Peter* acquainted the rest (after their return from Mount *Olivet* where our Saviour had taken leave of them) that according to the prophetical

phetical Prediction, *Judas* having fallen from his Ministry, it was necessary another should be substituted in his Bishoprick, out of those who had been constant Disciples of *Christ*, to be witness with them of his Miracles, Death and Resurrection. And accordingly by consent two Candidates, both duly qualify'd for the holy Office were propos'd, viz. *Joseph*, whose fir-name was *Bar-sabas*, and *Matthias*. The Holy Ghost not being yet given in full Power (by whose Inspiration they were chiefly directed afterwards) they proceeded to the Election by casting Lots, a method then in great use both among the Jews and Gentiles, especially in chusing Judges and Magistrates; but to shew that 'twas no common affair they were going about, the whole Congregation of Christians there assembled (in number about 120) *with one accord made their solemn address to Heaven, beseeching the omniscient God, the searcher of Hearts, (who perfectly understood the Tempers and Dispositions of Men) that he would be pleased to direct the choice, and shew which of the two he saw best qualified for the Apostolick Charge from which Judas had unhappily fallen; the Lot falling upon St. Matthias, he was afterwards numbered with the Eleven Apostles.*

After the descent of the Holy Ghost this day's Saint among the rest betook himself to his Province, to exercise the great Employment upon which he was sent. The first Fruits of his Ministry (which was there very successful) he spent in *Judaea*; from thence he betook himself to other Provinces Eastward, his principal residence being near the irruption of the River *Asparus* and the River *Hyffus*, where he met with a barbarous rude People; who, after he had converted great numbers to the Christian Faith, as a reward for his Labours and Sufferings, bestow'd upon him the Crown

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Crown of Martyrdom; which some say was by Crucifixion; others, that he was stoned to Death by the Jews as a Blasphemer.

From the observation of this Festival we may learn; *First*, To beware of Covetousness from the fatal consequences it brought upon *Judas*. *Secondly*, Not to absent our selves from publick Worship, tho' he that officiates happens to be an ill Man. *Thirdly*, From the Apostles practice at this Election religiously to observe the Ember Fast. And, *Lastly*, We are taught in the Collect to pray "that the Church may be deliver'd from false Apostles, and always ordered and guided by faithful and true Pastors.

The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin MARY, commonly call'd LADY-DAY, March 25.

THE Church keeps this Feast partly in honour of the Blessed Virgin *Mary*, and partly in regard to the Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour, who being the *eternal Word of the Father*, was at this time *made Flesh*. And it is call'd the Annunciation or Declaration, which (we read in this day's Gospel) was made by the Angel *Gabriel* to the blessed Virgin in the sixth Month, which was nine Months before she brought forth her first-born Son. This Annunciation the Angel usher'd in with that heavenly Salutation, *Hail! Thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee, thou art blessed among Women*. And when he perceived her thoughts in some disorder about the nature of the Complement from such an extraordinary Ambassador, having first armed her against any distrust or jealousy she might have otherwise entertain'd concerning the truth of what he was about to deliver, by bidding her *not fear* because *she was fa-*

voured of the Lord; he proceeded to his Annunciation, referring to the Prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Messiah (the portion of Scripture for this day's Epistle) and told her she should conceive in her Womb, and bring forth a Son, and call his name Jesus; and that he should be call'd the Son of the Highest, that the Lord would give unto him the Throne of his Father David, and he should reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there should be no end.

And when the blessed Virgin had given him audience with an awful respect and reverence suitable to so divine a Message, though not doubting the power of God to effect the truth of what he had deliver'd; yet, being only espoused to a Man, she modestly desired to be satisfied in the manner of the Mystery, *How shall this be, seeing I know not a Man?* To which the Angel reply'd, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, and that which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God* And farther to confirm her that nothing was impossible with God, he told her, *that her Cousin Elizabeth who had hitherto been called barren, was now six Months gone with Child in her old Age.* The holy Gospel concludes with an account of that Humility and Meekness, Faith and Resignation which the holy Virgin express'd in her obedient reply, *Behold the hand-maid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy Word.* And from that time the eternal Son of the Father, very God of very God, being of one Substance with the Father, became incarnate and took upon him our Nature in the Womb of the blessed Virgin, whereby two intire and perfect Natures (*viz.* the Godhead and Manhood) were united in one Person never to be divided, which make one *Christ* very God and very Man.

And

And as this second Person in the holy Trinity, the Son of God begotten by an eternal Generation before all Worlds, for us Men and our Salvation not only came down from Heaven, but also condescended to a second Generation according to the Flesh, by suffering himself to be form'd and conceiv'd in the Womb of this blessed Virgin, and at last to be brought forth by her, hereby vouchsafing her the honour to be the Mother of God; so it is upon this account all Generations hitherto have, and from henceforth shall for ever call and acknowledge the immaculate holy Virgin *Mary* Blessed.

This Festival happening (in a manner) always before *Easter*, the Collect is a devout Prayer wherein the Church at once puts us in mind of these two great works in order to our Redemption, the Incarnation and Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*.

St. MARK the Evangelist, April 25.

BY observing this Festival we commemorate the Martyrdom of the holy Evangelist *St. Mark*. The name of Evangelist was at first common to all that preached the Gospel; but was afterwards confin'd to those four (whereof this day's Martyr was one) who wrote the History of the Life, Preaching, Miracles, Death and Resurrection of our Saviour.

He was born of Jewish Parents, descended from the Tribe of *Levi*, and of the Line of the Priesthood; and being said to be *St. Peter's* Sister's Son was probably converted by him, who is also said to be Surety for him at his Baptism; and afterwards for some time entertain'd him as his Amānuensis and Interpreter: For tho' the Apo-

files

flles were inspired, and among other miraculous Powers had the Gift of Languages bestow'd upon them by the same Spirit; yet that of Interpretation of Tongues was a more peculiar Gift of some than others, and probably the Talent conferr'd in an especial manner on this day's Saint. Besides, the Christian Assemblies in those days being generally made of People of different Countries, and as it was impossible for the same Person to discourse in more Languages than one at the same time, so consequently without an Interpreter the Sermon must be lost upon all the Auditors that did not understand the Language wherein it was deliver'd; whereupon some were enabled to interpret to them in their own native Language either by Word or Writing.

St. *Peter* took St. *Mark* along with him in his Apostolical Progress thro' *Italy*; and at *Rome* St. *Peter's* Converts were so taken with his preaching, that they would not be satisfied till they had prevailed upon St. *Mark* to deliver to them in Writing the Historical Account of our Saviour which they had receiv'd from St. *Peter's* Mouth in the Pulpit, which at their request he faithfully performed, and having it perused and approved by St. *Peter's* Authority, it has been read ever since in all Christian Churches by the name of St. *Mark's* Gospel.

Being ordained by St. *Peter*, he was sent by him to plant Christianity in *Egypt*. His chief residence was at *Alexandria*, where he had not only the ordinary success to convert great numbers to the Christian Faith, but to so extraordinary a strict profession of it had he brought his Profelytes, that a learned Jew wrote a Book of the peculiar rites and way of Life of St. *Mark's* Converts.

Yet did he not confine the exercise of his Function to *Alexandria*, but removed westward to the parts of *Lybia*; where tho' he found the People

as barbarous in their Manners as idolatrous in their Worship, yet by his Preaching and Miracles he prevail'd upon them to embrace the Gospel of *Christ*, and before he left them confirm'd them in the profession of it. Then returning to *Alexandria* he settled the Affairs of that Church, making a provision for Succession by constituting and ordaining Governours and Pastors: And happy it was for that Church that he had finish'd that, so great and necessary a work, which he had not long performed, before himself was barbarously dispatch'd out of this World, which happened about *Easter* (the Heathens of that Country at that time celebrating the Solemnities of *Serapis*) and being resolv'd to vindicate *that* their Idol, which this holy Man had told them was no God; they rudely broke in upon him whilst he was solemnly engaged in the Worship of the true God, bound him hand and foot with Cords, and dragg'd his Body through the most stony and rugged Streets till they came to a precipice near the Sea; but concluding their Cruelty would have been too compassionate if they should have made an end of him at once by throwing him down headlong, they lodg'd his shattered Body in a Prison (where his Soul was comforted by a divine Vision) and early next Morning they renewed their Tragedy, dragging again his already mangled Carcase till his Flesh being torn off and his Blood run out, his Spirits at last failing, the good Man thus exchanged this Life for a better.

The Epistle and Gospel have no other relation to the day than this; the Epistle refers to the Ascension of our Lord, this Martyr suffering near that time of the Year.

The holy Gospel relates the Consolation and mutual Love betwixt *Christ* and his Members under the parable of the Vine, with the blessed reward

ward that attends those that faithfully adhere to him, as did this day's holy Martyr, whose Example that we may be able to imitate (as we are instructed by his Doctrine) we pray in the Collect for Grace, " That we may be establish'd in the " truth of the Gospel, and not carry'd about " with every blast of vain Doctrine.

St. PHILIP and St. JAMES, May 1.

THIS is a double Festival kept in memory of the Martyrdom of those two Apostles *St. Philip* and *St. James* the less, who are said to be put to Death both on the same day of the Month, tho' neither at the same Place nor in the same Year.

St. Philip being born at *Bethsaida*, a fishing Town near the Sea of *Tyberias*, had the honour to be first called to the Discipleship: For tho' our Saviour met *St. Andrew* and his Brother, and convers'd with them some little time after his return out of the Wilderness, yet they returned to their Trade and were not called till above a Year after, when *St. John* Baptist was cast into Prison; whereas the very next day after his meeting and parting with them as he was passing through *Galilee*, he found *Philip* whom he commanded to follow him (his constant form of chusing his Disciples) which call he immediately obey'd; and no sooner had Religion taken possession of his mind, but like an active Principle it began to diffuse it self: For as soon as he had entered himself in the School of *Christ*, his first business was to make Profelytes, and the first he found was *Nathaniel*, a Person of Note and Eminency (being a Doctor of the Law) whom he not only acquainted with the good News that he had found the *Messiah*, but conducted him immediately to him.

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The Upper *Asia* was allotted to this Apostle's Province, where, by his indefatigable Labours, constant Preaching, and the Efficacy of his Miracles, he made a great number of Converts, whom he baptized and confirmed in the Christian Faith. At last, after many Years good success in his Apostolick Office, he went to *Hierapolis* a rich and populous City in *Phrygia*, where among other Idolatries he found them worship a great Serpent or Dragon; his righteous Soul being vexed to see a People enslaved to so vile an Error, could not cease soliciting Heaven till by his fervent Prayers he had procur'd the death, or at least the vanishing of their beloved Idol; and then taking this opportunity to make them sensible how unbecoming it was to give divine Honours to such odious Creatures, and that God alone was to be worshipped, preaching to them *Christ* and the Resurrection, he made them so ashamed of their Idolatry, that great numbers of them became Christians. This success so far enrag'd the idolatrous Magistrates of the City, that having seized the Apostle, and as a preparative to their farther design'd Cruelty caus'd him to be severely scourged, and then led to execution, being bound; some say they hang'd him by the neck to a Pillar, others affirm they crucified him.

From his Example we may learn:

First, To prepare our minds readily to obey all the suggestions and offers of divine Grace.

Secondly, To be forward to direct others in the same way of Happiness with our selves, *i. e.* when we are converted to endeavour to confirm and strengthen our Brethren. And,

Lastly, With boldness to profess the Truth whenever the Providence of God calls us to give a Testimony to it, tho' it be with the hazard of our Lives.

St. *James* whose Festival we this day celebrate, is call'd the Brother of our Lord; being the Son of *Joseph* by a former Wife; he is call'd St. *James* the less, to distinguish him from the other St. *James*, who was a Person of greater Stature of Body; he is also call'd *James* the just, from the great reputation he had acquired for his Virtue, Justice and Piety; he is also call'd the Son of *Alpheus*, which some think was another name of *Joseph*, it being customary (as has been already observed) for the Jews to have two names; tho' others think he has this name from his being a Disciple to a Sect of the Jews called *Alpheans*.

After the Resurrection St. *Paul* tells us this Apostle was honoured with a particular appearance of our Saviour to him, which perhaps might be in compassion to his humane Nature, lest he should have fainted by too tedious Fasting, he being said to have made a solemn Vow, that from the time he drank of the Cup at the Institution of the last Supper *he would eat no Bread till he had seen the Lord risen from the Dead.*

He was Bishop of *Jerusalem*, which dignity some affirm to be conferr'd upon him by our Lord himself before his Ascension; others that he was chosen by the rest of the Apostles. We find him sit as President in the Synod held at *Jerusalem*, to determine the Controversie about *Mosaick Rites*, where the case was open'd by St. *Peter*, and argued by St. *Paul* and St. *Barnabas*, who all at last submitted to the final determination of St. *James* the Bishop of the place.

This great Saint was remarkable for all manner of Christian Graces, his Temper was meek and humble, his Temperance admirable, neither eating Flesh nor drinking Wine; Prayer was so much his business and delight, that by his frequent Devotions his knees were become as hard and brawny

ny as a Camel's; in short, his Piety and Virtue were so exemplary that he was not only revered by Christians, but honoured by the Jews, many of the more noble sort being by his Instructions and Example brought to a belief of the Christian Faith; which success provoked his malicious Enemies to conspire his ruin; who being vex'd to see St. Paul escape their fury by appealing to Caesar, resolv'd now to turn their revenge upon St. James: However, to carry the matter on more plausibly, they set the Scribes and Pharisees at work to ensnare him, desiring him to take the opportunity of that great confluence of People at the paschal Lamb, to undeceive them and rectify the false Opinion they had receiv'd concerning Jesus, whom they look'd upon to be the *Messiah*, and to this end desir'd him to go with them to the top of the Temple, where he might be best seen and heard. And when he was plac'd on a Pinnacle of the Temple, they address'd themselves to him to instruct the People in the Institutions of the crucify'd Jesus, who with an audible voice told them, *That that Jesus whom they enquired after was now sitting at the right hand of God, and would come again in the Clouds of Heaven*; upon the hearing of which, the People below glorified the Blessed Jesus, and proclaim'd *Hosanna to the Son of David*. The Scribes and Pharisees finding themselves disappointed in the Peoples affection to the Apostle and his Doctrine, took this occasion to dispatch him, that by his Fate others might take warning not to believe what he had deliver'd; whereupon crying out *that Jesus himself was seduced and become an Impostor*, they threw him down headlong from the place where he stood; being (not quite kill'd, but) very much bruise'd by the fall, he recover'd so much strength as to get upon his knees to pray for his Murtherers, which whilst

he was a doing they fell afresh upon the remainders of his Life with a shower of Stones; at last one more cruelly kind than the others, put an end to his misery by beating out his brains with a Fuller's Club (in the 96th Year of his Age, and about 24 after *Christ's* Ascension) to the great grief not only of all good Christians, but even all sober and just Men among the Jews: The murder of this good Man *Josephus* reckons as one of those crying Sins that more immediately hasten'd the divine Vengeance to bring Ruin and Destruction upon the Jewish Nation.

The Epistle for the day is the beginning of that Epistle which he wrote to the Jewish Converts dispers'd and scatter'd abroad, to comfort them in their Sufferings, confirm them against Error, secure their Patience and Charity, encourage them to faithful perseverance, and fortifie them against those Temptations whereby their Faith might be endanger'd.

The Gospel gives us an account of the discourse our Lord had with St. *Philip* concerning himself a little before the paschal Supper, wherein our Blessed Saviour gently reproves his Ignorance after so long attendance upon his Doctrine; whereby we are taught that God expects Improvements from us according to the opportunities we have of being instructed in the School of *Christ*.

St. BARNABAS the Apostle, June 11.

THE Church this day celebrates the Feast of St. *Barnabas* the Apostle, who was of the Tribe of *Levi*, born at *Cyprus*, descended of rich and religious Parents, train'd up in the Study of the Law under the same Tutor with St. *Paul*, where their acquaintance might very probably lay the

the Foundation of that intimate Friendship afterwards contracted betwixt those two Apostles.

His proper name was *Joses* or *Joseph*, and by the Apostles he was surnam'd *Barnabas*, which signifies the *Son of Consolation*, either upon the account of his eminent prophetick Gifts, and the great dexterity he had in administering relief and comfort to troubled Minds, or as an acknowledgement of his great Charity in selling his whole Estate for the relief and consolation of poor distressed Christians.

His first employ in the Church was at *Antioch*, whither he was sent by the Apostles to confirm and settle that Church upon the joyful news they had receiv'd that many in that City had embrac'd the Christian Faith. And here his labours had so good success, that the numbers added to the Church became too great a charge for a single Person; whereupon he went to *Tarsus*, and call'd in *St. Paul* to his assistance; who returning with him as his coadjutor, they labour'd together a whole year in establishing that Church. From hence *St. Paul* and he went to carry the charitable Supply which they had collected among the Christians at *Antioch* for relief of the poor Brethren in *Judea*, who were reduc'd to great necessities by a famine that raged in the Country. Thus far the Epistle for the day gives an account of this Apostle.

In the 13th Chapter of the *Acts* we read how the Apostles were directed by the Holy Ghost to dispatch this Apostle with *St. Paul* to convert the Gentile World, with the manner of their Ordination, viz. Fasting, Praying and Imposition of hands; *When the Apostles had fasted and prayed and laid their hands upon them they sent them away* At *Paphos*, a City in *Cyprus* remarkable for Idolatry, they converted the Governour *Sergius Paulus* by the Miracle they wrought upon the Sorcerer *Ely-*

mar. After three Years travel they returned to *Antioch*, whence being expell'd by a Persecution, they went to *Iconium*, at which place we read in the second Lesson for the Morning, how upon some wicked Designs the Jews laid against them they fled to *Lystra*, where for the Miracle wrought upon the Cripple they were reputed as Gods; and as they gave *St. Paul* the name of *Mercurius*, because he was the chief Speaker, so they call'd *St. Barnabas Jupiter* (their Sovereign Deity) either on the account of his venerable Age, or the Gravity and Comeliness of his Person. The remaining part of that Chapter continues the relation of their Travels, Labours and Persecutions. In the next Chapter, which is the second Lesson for the Evening, we have an Account of this Apostle's behaviour in the Controversy between the Jewish and Gentile Converts. At first he vigorously opposed the Judaizers, but afterwards *St. Paul* complains in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, that he was so far byass'd by *St. Peter's* conduct in that affair, that he dissembled his Christian Liberty to curry favour with the Jewish Converts. In the close of this Chapter we read of the great difference that happen'd between these two intimate Friends, and how they parted upon it: Tho' the Providence of God turn'd this their strife and parting to the benefit of the Church, for by their separation Christianity became more diffusive than if they had continued together.

In his old Age returning to his own Country *Cyprus*, to spend the remainder of his days in converting and doing good among his Countrymen the Jews, at *Salamis* a City in that Island; some Jews being come from *Syria*, set upon him as he was disputing in the Synagogue, and shut him up in a corner of it till Night; and then bringing him forth after infinite Tortures, some

say they stoned him to Death; others that putting a rope about his Neck, they dragged him to a Stake and there burnt him.

From the Example of this day's Saint learn we,
First, To despise Ease and the Pleasures of this Life, when we have an opportunity to propagate the Christian Religion.

Secondly, Not only to contribute out of our Fortunes to the relief of the necessitous, but to excite others to the duty of Charity.

Thirdly, From the reproof we find this day's Saint had from *St. Paul* for his too much compliance with the Jews, let us take care that no worldly Interest prevail with us to dissemble or complement away our Religion. And,

Lastly, In the Collect we are taught to pray
 " for the gifts and assistance of God's Holy Spirit,
 " and Grace to use them always to his Honour
 " and Glory.

St. JOHN the Baptist, June 24.

WE are call'd this day to celebrate the Birth of *St. John* the Baptist: A Birth-day which seems accompany'd with as much Joy as Wonder. A Birth which God Almighty sent an Angel from Heaven to notify to his Parents, that they might not be too much surpriz'd by so great a Blessing, which they had not the least reason to expect, being both of them so well stricken in Years, and his Mother not only old, but also had been hitherto reputed barren. And as his Birth was wonderful, so being prophetic of our Lord (whom he saluted out of his Mother's Womb) it was no less joyful in that he was the Messenger the Prophet *Malachi* mentions that *was sent to prepare the way of the Lord*; whom also the Angel

Gabriel had promised his Father *Zacharias* that he should be great in the sight of the Lord, and that he should neither drink Wine nor strong drink, and that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost from his Mother's Womb; and consequently, as the Harbinger of our Saviour, be the greatest of all the Prophets.

And according to the Prophecy of *Isaiab*, as well as the Prediction of the Angel, this day's Saint being qualify'd for his Office (by adding to the grace of his Birth an innocency of Life) began his Ministry in the Wilderness of *Judaea*, by proclaiming to the Jews the approach of the *Messiah*, and telling them that their expectation being so near to be fulfilled, they would do well to break off their sinful habits by a speedy Repentance, and thereby qualify themselves for the Kingdom of Heaven, which he told them was nigh at hand.

He was call'd *the Baptist*, because he entered his Disciples into a new Institution of Life by Baptism: 'Tis true it was a Rite before in use among the Jews, but never used before this time to shadow out Repentance and Remission of Sins; besides, he might be call'd *the Baptist* in that he had the honour to baptize our Saviour, whose Baptism was accompany'd with a miraculous attestation from Heaven. And so careful was he to confirm his Disciples in the belief of the *Messiah*, and that their Faith might not be shaken after his departure, that when he was in Prison he sent them to satisfy themselves from our Saviour's own Mouth, whether he was the *Messiah* that should come, or they should still look for another.

Tho' the Church principally commemorates the mysterious Nativity of this day's Saint, yet she doth not omit his Life and Death in her Offices for the day.

For the Epistle is *Isaiab's* Prophecy concerning his Birth, which the Holy Gospel gives us the History of.

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The second Lesson for the Morning records his manner of Life as well as his Office.

Having providentially escap'd the cruelty of one *Herod* in his Infancy, he led a mortified Life, his *Garment was made of Camels hair, with a leathern Girdle about his Loyns*, and his habitation was a Wilderness; and here it was he entered upon his Office of Preaching and Baptizing. In his Preaching he did not handle the *Word of God deceitfully*, by flattering great Men in their Sins; no, he had no respect of Persons in the discharge of his Office, but impartially condemned and equally reprov'd the Vices of all Ranks and Orders of Men; and 'twas this freedom of reproof (which he took in the Pulpit) that cost him his head. For tho' he had escaped (as is already mention'd) one *Herod*, yet the second Lesson for the Evening gives us an account of his falling into the hands of another *Herod* every whit as bloody. This *Herod* having turn'd away his lawful Wife, liv'd in incestuous Adultery with *Herodias*, Wife to his Brother *Philip* who was still alive: And St. *John* (who knew not how to trim or flatter a Patron) as boldly rebuked him for it, and in plain terms told him, *'twas his duty to put her away*. This was a Doctrine neither he nor his Mistress could brook. For tho' the austerity of St. *John's* Life, and the authority of his Doctrine wrought so far upon *Herod*, that he not only heard him gladly, but also observ'd and did many things which he taught; yet when he came to touch upon his beloved Crime, the truth of his Tongue must forfeit his Head: And tho' perhaps *Herod* would not of himself (more it may be out of Fear of the People than out of kindness to the Baptist) have proceeded to such a piece of Cruelty; yet *Herodias*, who could not be easy under such Discipline, took the opportunity of *Herod's* rash Oath to her Daughter,

Daughter, and by her demanded his Head, which *Herod* (tho' with seeming regret) granted, pretending to that false Notion of Honour (still too much in fashion) that an unlawful Oath ought to be performed; whereas in truth, a rash or unlawful Oath obliges a Man to nothing but Repentance, and the speedy breaking it is a necessary part of that Repentance due for taking it.

The great use we are to make of this Festival is with the Church in the Collect, to pray for Grace to imitate this day's great Saint in constantly speaking the Truth, boldly rebuking Vice, and patiently suffering for the Truth's sake.

St. PETER's Day, June 29.

THE Church this day celebrates the martyrdom of the first Apostle *St. Peter*, born at *Bethsaida* (before-mention'd) by Trade a Fisherman, call'd *Simon* at his Circumcision, the name *Cephas* or *Peter* (which signifies a Rock) was given him by our Blessed Saviour to denote the firmness of his Faith, and how vigorously active he should be in building the Church upon such a *Foundation as the Gates of Hell should never prevail against it.*

The occasion of his becoming a Disciple was this; about a Year after his Brother *St. Andrew* had brought him to see the Lord, it happened that our Blessed Saviour one day retiring for his privacies to the banks of the Sea of *Galilee*, finding himself followed by the Multitude, to avoid the throng stept into a little Fisher-boat, near the Shore, which belong'd to *St. Peter*, who with his Companions were gone to wash and dry their Nets: Upon *St. Peter's* return our Saviour desired him to put a little from the Shore, whence

he

he taught the People; and to convince them *that he was a Teacher come from God*, he ended his Sermon with such a miraculous draught of Fishes as made St. Peter humbly acknowledge his own vileness, and express his fear that the divine Vengeance might pursue him. But our blessed Saviour presently allays his fears by assuring him, *the Miracle was not wrought to terrifie but to confirm and strengthen his Faith*; telling him withal, *that he design'd both him and his Brother for a more noble employment than catching of Fish*, and commanded them both to follow him, which they immediately without any hesitation comply'd with.

This Apostle was the first of those three that were admitted more familiarly than the rest into our Lord's Privacies and Retirements. And when several of the Disciples left our Saviour upon their Discovery that *he was not such a Messiah as they look'd for* (whose Kingdom should consist in outward Pomp and Plenty) and that the Duties he required were like to grate hard upon them; our Saviour asking his Apostles, *if they would also go away?* St. Peter (as generally the spokesman for all the rest) answered, *They had no where to go to better their Condition*, and 'twas *he only had the words of eternal life*; 'twas his Doctrine alone that could instruct them in the way to Heaven.

He is always set down the first in the List of the Apostles, his Age and Gravity as well as his Courage and Constancy fitly qualifying him for the primacy of Order: Tho' we do not find any other privilege he enjoy'd above them; in confessing *Christ* he only spoke the sense of his Brethren; and if he is call'd a *Rock* (in the Gospel for the day) they are equally call'd Foundations upon which the Walls of the Church are erected; and the power of the Keys is equally shared amongst 'em by our Saviour's special Commission.

Yet

Yet (tho' this great Apostle was every way thus qualify'd) to shew that the best of Men are subject to Infirmities, and to caution us against Presumption, Self-confidence and Vain-glory, we have a failure of this Saint's recorded for our Instruction. Upon the approach of our Saviour's Sufferings, trusting too much upon his own Strength, he mightily betray'd his Weakness and humane Frailty in denying his Master. But then again for our direction to *turn from the evil of our ways by a speedy Repentance*; we read how quickly he recover'd himself by a gracious look from our Saviour, passionately bewails his folly, and washes away his Guilt by his penitential Tears.

After the descent of the Holy Ghost, this Apostle in his first Sermon converted 3000 Souls. The next thing is (what we have in the two second Lessons) his preaching to the People that came to see the lame Man he had restor'd, which cure he professed was not wrought by any *power or holiness* either in him or St. John, but by *God and his Son Jesus Christ*, and *through Faith in his name*; and then boldly reprehending them for *crucifying the Lord of Glory*, &c. The most remarkable passage that follow'd, was the exemplary Punishment he inflicted upon *Ananias and Sapphira* for their Sacrilege. At last, after his long Travels through *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia* and *Asia*, his painful Preaching and indefatigable Labours in defence of the Gospel (set down at large in the *Acts of the Apostles*) as well as imminent dangers he miraculously escap'd (particularly that mention'd in the Epistle.) Towards the latter end of his days he went to *Rome*, where he bestow'd all his time and pains in establishing the Christian Religion, and there at last suffered Martyrdom under *Nero*, being provok'd by his success against *Simon Magus*; who having fail'd in an attempt to raise a young Gentleman

Gentleman from the dead, wherein *St. Peter* succeeded, to regain his reputation pretended to fly up into Heaven, but by the Prayers of *St. Peter* that such a delusion might not pass upon the People, his Wings he had made failing him, he dy'd the next day of the bruises he receiv'd by his fall. Another provocation this Saint had given that lascivious Prince, was his reducing many lewd Women to a sober Life, thereby thwarting the wanton temper to which that Prince was become so much a Slave.

The Death he was condemn'd to was Crucifixion, but affirming himself unworthy to dye in the same posture his Lord had suffered before him, at his request to the Officers he was crucify'd with his Head downwards. His Body being embalm'd (after the Jewish manner) by one of his Friends, was bury'd in the *Vatican* near the triumphal Way, where there was a Church erected to his memory, which is now for its Magnificence, Riches and Beauty one of the Wonders of the World, and known by the name of *St. Peter's at Rome*.

The use we are to make of this Festival is from this Saint's example :

First, To learn readily to obey every divine Call, and humbly to acknowledge our own Vileness.

Secondly, Boldly to assert the Truth, but at the same time to beware how we rely and presume upon our own Strength, lest we provoke God to withdraw his Grace, *therefore when we stand to take heed lest we fall*.

Thirdly, Speedily to repent, and heartily to bewail our Errors.

Fourthly, To be careful how we make Vows, and take as much heed to observe them.

Fifthly, Not to alienate things consecrated or dedicated to pious uses. And,

Lastly,

Lastly, To make up our former failures by our future Zeal and Industry in God's Service, and resolutely (if thereto called) to suffer for our holy Religion. And that Christians may be the better instructed in these necessary Duties, we are taught by the Church in the Collect to pray "That all Bishops and Pastors of the Church may diligently preach God's Word, and the People follow the same, that they may receive the Crown of everlasting Glory."

St. JAMES the Apostle, July 25.

THIS day we solemnize the Martyrdom of *St. James*, surnam'd *the Great*, either by reason of his age or bulk in comparison of the other *St. James*, or upon the account of some particular favour confer'd upon him by our Saviour, as being one of his three Favourites. He was Son of *Zebedee*, and Brother of *St. John* before-mentioned, and Partner with *St. Peter* in the fishing Trade. He and his Brother being in the Ship or Boat with their Father when our Saviour pass'd by the Sea of *Galilee*, were call'd by him to the Discipleship; he never stood to question the authority or dispute the Commands of our Saviour, but answer'd *Christ's follow me* with a chearful obedience, left his aged Father in the Ship, and broke through all Impediments that might have perswaded his stay, which ready compliance gave an early Omen to his future greatness.

The exercise of his Apostolick Office was confin'd to *Judea* and *Samaria*, tho' some *Spanish* Historians will have it that after the death of *St. Stephen* he went into *Spain* and there planted Christianity.

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His great Zeal and Success in propagating the Christian Faith, provok'd the fury of *Herod* to vex certain of the Church, who having the power of the Sword newly lodg'd in his hand by a Grant from the Emperor *Claudius*, caused this day's Saint to be put to death, not only to satisfy his own natural thirst after human Gore (being of a bloody race) but also to oblige the Populacy, and shew his Zeal for the Religion most agreeable to the Inclination of the People. This *Herod* was Grandson to *Herod* the Great, who butchered the Innocents; a Man of so mean Extraction, that he burnt the Genealogies of the *Hebrews* to make himself a Gentleman: He was Nephew to *Herod* the Tetrarch that murdered St. *John* the Baptist, and being a Branch sprung from a Root thus plentifully watered with the Blood of Saints, and an obscure Family as well as a Stranger and Alien by his birth to their Nation, what could be expected from such a Person but barbarous Inhumanity? And that their expectations might not be balk'd, and to shew that his actions should every way answer his Character, humane Gore must be shed as his inaugurating Sacrifice, his Kingdom (like the Walls of *Rome*) must have its Foundation cemented with Blood, and that of Christians too, *he kill'd* (saith the Epistle for the day) *James the Brother of John with the Sword*. It was not, we may be sure, out of any regard *Herod* had to the Apostle, that he suffer'd what we look upon as so honourable a Death, which was that of beheading. For those who are versed in Jewish Antiquities affirm this death of beheading as ignominious as any of the rest, and that the Jews only practis'd it upon such Malefactors as were guilty of seducing of the People from the Worship of their own to that of some strange God; and 'tis not improbable St. *James* might suffer upon that pretence;

pretence ; for his active Zeal for his crucify'd Master, and the propagating his Doctrine, endeavouring thereby to convince them of their Error, and bring them to acknowledge him whom they had crucify'd to be the *very Christ* (which being no ways allow'd by the Zealots of their Party) might with them fall under the notion of drawing them to a strange God, and so bring him under that Condemnation. Thus many times it happens, to be zealous in a good Cause draws upon Men the punishment due to a bad one.

What was very remarkable in this Apostle, at his Tryal he defended his own Cause (*i. e.* the Christian Religion) with that undaunted Christian Courage and Magnanimity, that the strength of his Arguments, delivered with so much resolution, had that powerful effect upon his Accuser, that he became his Convert, repented of what he had done, beg'd the Apostle's pardon (who as readily upon his repentance gave him absolution) publickly profess'd himself a Christian, and freely at the same time submitted his Head to that fatal but happy stroke.

Here it may not be amiss to take notice how the divine Vengeance pursu'd these three Tyrant *Herods*. The first, that murdered the Innocents, was smitten by God with many Plagues and Tortures, a slow burning Fire afflicted his Entrails, a ravenous insatiable Appetite his Stomach, an Ulcer his Bowels, accompany'd with a tormenting Cholick ; a swelling his Feet, which made them of a venomous Colour ; at last his Members being eaten up with crawling Worms, he rotted alive, and dy'd of terrible Convulsions. The second *Herod*, that murder'd St. *John* the Baptist, upon his disgraceful putting away his lawful Wife to make room for his incestuous Embraces, King *Aretas* his Wife's Father making War against him, roured

rounted him and his whole Army, which *Josephus* reckons as a Plague upon him for beheading the Baptist. This last *Herod*, who slew *St. James*, was the same *Herod* we read of in the twelfth Chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles*, who having without any dislike receiv'd that blasphemous Applause from the People for his eloquent Harangue, *was immediately smote by an Angel, because he gave not God the Glory, and was eaten up of Worms*

What we may observe from this Festival is,

First, From this Saint's readiness to leave all to follow *Christ*, we are taught by his Example to leave all worldly enjoyments, Father and Mother, Wife and Children, Houses and Lands, rather than forfeit a good Conscience.

Secondly, From the effect his Behaviour had upon the Informer at his death, we see God's Blessing attends those that depend upon his Providence, resolutely discharge their duties, and dare to lay down their Lives for *Christ's* sake and his Gospel.

The holy Gospel for the day gives us an account of a rash ambitious Perition this Apostle and his Brother put up to our Saviour by their Mother, as also the candid method our Saviour made use of to convince them of the imprudence of their demand (at the same time quieting the rest of the Apostles who were offended at the request) by instructing them in the nature of his Kingdom, which was far different from those of earthly Princes, that in his service Humility was the way to Honour, and he who took most pains to do good *should be greatest*, proposing his own example who came not to be ministered to, but to minister and serve others, tho' at the expence of his own Life.

The Collect is a devout Prayer, "That according to this Saint's Example we may forsake all worldly and carnal Affections, and be evermore

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"ready

“ ready to follow and obey God’s holy Commandments.

St. BARTHOLOMEW the Apostle, Aug. 24.

THIS day is kept holy in commemoration of the Martyrdom of *St. Bartholomew*, so called, as the Son of *Tholmai*, a common way of distinguishing Men among the Jews, by adding *Bar*, which signifies *Son*, to the Father’s name, as *Barjona* the Son of *Jonas*, *Bartimeus*, the Son of *Timaeus*, much like the *Mac*s still in use in *Ireland* and the *Highlands* of *Scotland*, and the *Ap*s in *Wales*.

Having no more of him in the evangelical History than the bare mention of his name, most Writers conclude him to be conceal’d under the name of *Nathanael*, because as *St. John* never mentions him in the number of the Apostles, so the other Evangelists take no notice of *Nathanael*; and as *St. John* joins together *Philip* and *Nathanael* in their coming to *Christ*, so the other Evangelists always join *Philip* and *Bartholomew*; and what puts this matter beyond dispute is, that we find *Nathanael* in the List of the Apostles to whom our Saviour appear’d after his Resurrection, where there was *Simon Peter*, *Thomas* and *Nathanael* of *Galilee*, and two other Disciples. Now that by Disciples is here only meant Apostles, is plain both from the names here reckoned up; and because it is said, *This is the third time that Jesus appeared to his Disciples*; whereas it is evident the two foregoing appearances were made to none but Apostles.

Concluding him then to be the same with *Nathanael*, he was first conducted by *St. Philip* to see the long expected *Messiah*, and at his first approach our Lord receiv’d him with an honourable Character,

Character, as a Person of true Sincerity and Integrity, without all Guile and Hypocrisy, *An Israelite indeed who waited for the Redemption of Israel*, which (being well vers'd in the *Law and the Prophets*) he was assur'd by Scripture Predictions to be now at hand. Therefore he made no objections against the meanness of his Birth, or the low Circumstances of his Parents, only excepted against the place *Nazareth*, as indeed he had reason, knowing *Bethlehem* of *Judea* to be the place foretold, as truly it was, the place where the *Messiah* should be born; but being conceiv'd and brought up at *Nazareth*, he was thence call'd by *St. Philip*, *Jesus of Nazareth*: Being soon satisfy'd in this point, he came readily to pay duty to our Lord; and tho' he was somewhat surpriz'd at our Saviour's first Salutation, wondering how he should know him so well at first sight, yet when our Lord told him *he saw him under the Fig-tree* before *St. Philip* called him, convinc'd by that instance of our Lord's Divinity, he presently confess'd *that he was now sure that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Son of God*, whom he had appointed to be the King and Governour of his Church; our Saviour answered, *That if upon such a slender inducement he had Faith enough to believe him to be the Messiah, he should have more convincing arguments to confirm his Faith, for he should e'er long see the Heavens opened to receive him thither, and the holy Angels visibly appearing to attend the Ascension of the Son of God.*

After whose Ascension, this holy Apostle travell'd as far as *India*, where he preached the Gospel and planted Christianity, and for the better confirmation of their Faith, left there behind him a written Copy of *St. Matthew's Gospel* in *Hebrew*. From thence he returned to the North-west parts of *Asia*, and at *Hierapolis* preaching the Christian

Faith (with St. *Philip*) and convincing them of their abominable Idolatries, he was there with that other Apostle design'd for Martyrdom by the enraged Magistrates; but after he was fastened to the Cross, upon a sudden conviction that the divine Vengeance would revenge his innocent Blood, he was taken down and dismiss'd. At last removing to *Albanople*, a City in *Armenia* the Great, and there endeavouring to reclaim a People miserably addicted to Idolatry, he was by the Command of the Governour put to a most cruel Death, which he chearfully underwent, comforting and confirming the Gentile Converts with his dying Breath in the height of his last Agonies. His Death is called cruel, because nothing could be more barbarous and inhumane than it is reported to have been, which was thus; He was first beaten with Cudgels, the next day crucify'd and flay'd alive as he was fastened to the Cross, and at last whilst his breath yet remained they cut off his Head. The use we may make of the observation of this day's Feast is:

First, To learn from his ready belief that *Jesus was the Christ*, to free our minds from all prejudice, when we desire satisfaction in any controverted point in Divinity.

Secondly, From the great Christian Fortitude and Resolution he shew'd at his Death, we are taught that true Zeal fears no dangers, boggles at no difficulties, but puts a Man upon laying down his Life chearfully whenever the Providence of God makes it become his Duty.

And as God furnish'd this day's Saint with Grace to dye preaching and comforting his Christian Converts, so we pray in the Collect, " That the Church may love that Word which he believed, and both preach and receive the same thro' *Jesus Christ*."

St. MAT.

St. MATTHEW the Apostle, Sept. 21.

WE this day celebrate the Feast of the Apostle *St. Matthew*, but whether in commemoration of his Martyrdom or his Call to the Apostleship, or both, I cannot determine; for tho' there was no visible Miracle made use of in the Call of this Apostle, as in the case of *St. Paul's* Conversion, yet considering the Circumstances of the Person, the nature of his Employment and the way of Life he was engag'd in, that he should at the first call embrace a Religion so contradictory to all these, exchange Riches for Poverty, a Custom-house for a Prison, great and wealthy Masters for a poor despised Saviour, an easie luxurious Life for difficulties and disgrace, his gainful Profession, Interest and Relations for a spiritual way of Commerce, which was like to bring nothing along with it but Persecutions and Afflictions; all these are no less matter of wonder and astonishment than to see a Persecutor become a Profelyte. And as the Church could not pass by such an Apostle without an annual Solemnity, so we may satisfy our selves in celebrating this day with respect to his extraordinary Call to the Apostleship, the History of his martyrdom being imperfect.

St. Matthew was also call'd *Levi*, and tho' a *Roman* Officer, both his names speak him to be of Jewish Extraction. By his Trade or rather Calling he was a Custom-house Officer to the *Romans*, by them call'd a *Publican*, and a place amongst them of great Reputation; but by the Jews accounted to scandalous an Employ, that they not only abhorr'd the name, but thought it unlawful to do them any office of common kindness, nor admit their Testimony or Evidence in any Cause; and not only debar'd them from Communion in publick

publick Worship, but also from all manner of Civil Society. The two great reasons why the Jews had such an aversion to Men of this Profession, were, first, because those Officers having farmed the Customs from the *Romans*, usually were very covetous and great Exacters, griping the People that they might be both able to pay their Rent, and raise Estates to their Families. And the other reason which made them still the more hated by the Jews, was that besides the grievance of the charge, they looking upon themselves as an ancient free-born People, esteem'd the paying of this Tribute as a standing instance of their Slavery; and what grated them the more was, that their own Countrymen should accept of these Offices, whereby they being oblig'd to converse with the Gentiles (which they held abominable) gave them a jealousy that they conspir'd with the *Romans* to bring perpetual Ruin and Slavery upon the Nation.

St. *Matthew's* station in this employ was upon the Coast of the Sea of *Galilee*, where the Gospel for the day tells us, our Blessed Saviour as he pass'd by that way seeing him sit there at the receipt of Custom, called him to come and follow him: The good Man being we may suppose in some measure prepared to receive the impressions which such a Call made upon him (by living at *Capernaum*, the usual place of *Christ's* residence, where his Preaching and Miracles were so frequent) laid aside all the considerations of his present wealthy Condition, and immediately arose and followed him. And to shew that he no ways repented of his Bargain, we read how he entertain'd our Lord and his Disciples at his House at a great Dinner, whither he invited several of his Acquaintance and Friends of his own Profession, hoping they might also be won by the Conversation of our Saviour. The Pharisees looking upon this Entertainment with an

evil Eye, began to upbraid his Disciple that a Person so pure and holy as their Master pretended to be, should eat and converse thus familiarly with *Publicans and Sinners*, Men of the worst Character and most infamous Reputation: But our Saviour presently reply'd upon them, that 'twas not those *who were whole, but they that were sick that wanted a Physician*, that his Company was most suitable where the Soul's necessity required it, that reclaiming of Sinners was more acceptable to God than any ritual Observances, and that *he came not to call the Righteous (i. e. such as proudly conceited themselves holy above the rest of Mankind) to Repentance, but to reduce Sinners, (i. e. humble self-convinc'd Offenders) to a better state and course of Life.*

After his call to the Apostleship he was a constant attender upon our Saviour till his Ascension, after which for several Years he preached up and down *Judea*; then betaking himself to the Conversion of the Gentile World, at their request he wrote his Gospel.

That part of *Æthiopia* next to *India* is said to have been the Province of his Apostolical Ministry, where he was entertain'd by the Eunuch, Chamberlane to Queen *Candace* (mention'd in the *Acts of the Apostles* to be converted by St. *Philip*) and there converted great numbers from Error and Idolatry to the Christian Faith, and (to provide for Succession) ordain'd Guides and Pastors to confirm them and bring over others, when he was gone, to embrace the Gospel. Amongst his many Converts he is said to have prevail'd upon *Ægyptus* King of *Æthiopia* to become a Christian and be baptized, but his Successor *Hiraculus* (who hated both this Apostle and his Doctrine) commanded him to be run through with a Sword.

From

From this day's Saint being call'd from the scandalous employ of a Publican to be a Disciple of *Christ*, we may learn that as God never rejects the hearty and sincere Repentance of the greatest Sinners, so he never fails to assist such with his divine Grace, as prepare their Minds to receive it, by readily obeying the motions of his Holy Spirit.

Secondly, From the Example of this Apostle we are taught to abominate that hellish Vice of Covetousness, as the most dangerous enemy to our Salvation; which not only alienates our Minds from God, but also obstructs those passages through which the consideration of Religion should enter into our Thoughts, makes Men so sordid, that they have not Hearts to enjoy what they possess. This Vice is the Patron of most of the Injustice, Treachery, Bloodshed and Perjury committed in the World; it makes Men fail in the hour of Temptation, so that when they should *leave all to follow Christ*, quit a gainful Employ for the sake of a good Conscience, they *go away sorrowful because they have great Possessions*; therefore that we may not be infected with this Contagion, we are instructed in the Collect to pray for Grace, "That we may forsake all covetous desires and inordinate love of Riches, to follow our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*."

St. MICHAEL and ALL-ANGELS, Sept. 29.

THIS Feast is kept in honour of *St. Michael and all Angels*, to express our gratitude for the many great advantages the Church has in all Ages obtain'd over the power of the Devil and his Agents by the assistance of those holy ministring Spirits; and the Church particularly commemorates *St. Michael*, as he was the Prince or tutelar Angel

of

of the Jewish Church, and so now of the Christian, for the Church which was once in the Jew, is now in the Christian.

The word Angel literally signifies no more than a Messenger or Embassador, but in common acceptation (as well as in holy Writ) is taken for a celestial Spirit employ'd by God to deliver his Will upon Earth on extraordinary occasions; and their being sent forth to minister to them that shall be Heirs of Salvation supposes them in a readiness to do all good Offices to good Men. It was a common receiv'd Opinion among the Heathens, and as constant a Tradition among the Jews, that every (at least good) Man had his Guardian-Angel; which Jewish Tradition seems in some measure to be countenanc'd by our Saviour, in that caution he gives (as we read in this day's Gospel) not to despise one of those *little ones*, *because their Angels always behold the Face of their Father*. And the first Christians seem'd to entertain (at least something like) this opinion, by what we read in the second Lesson for the Morning, of their affirming it to be *the Angel of St. Peter that was at the door*.

From their being thus appointed to be ministering Spirits, and always in a readiness to help, some have too far acknowledged their dependence upon them, and thought it their duty to give them divine Worship and Adoration; but the Angel in the *Revelation* argues the contrary from the nature of his employ; for the reason he gives why he would not receive adoration from St. John was, because he was *his fellow Servant*; this we find also severely reprov'd by St. Paul, *Let no Man deceive you in a voluntary Humility and worshipping of Angels*.

But besides the good Offices they are sent to do us in our Life time, they stand by us at the Hour

of Death, at that great struggle when the Soul and Body separates, to take care to convey the Souls of the Righteous thus separated to the mansions of bliss, as they did that of *Lazarus* into *Abraham's* Bosom. And at the day of Judgment they shall be great instruments in reuniting the Body to the Soul at the Resurrection, *when they shall come forth and sever the wicked from the just.*

In the Epistle we have a relation of a fight between *St. Michael* and his Angels, and the *Dragon* and his Angels, which some refer to the contest already mention'd between *St. Peter* and *Simon Magus*, wherein that Saint by his Prayers prevail'd against the Sorcerer: But 'tis interpreted to denote some eminent Victory the Church has obtained by the help of these ministring Spirits over the power and malice of the Devil. Besides this War in Heaven (here mention'd) seems to allude to the expulsion of *Lucifer* and the other rebellious Angels out of Heaven, some of the heavenly Host being commanded by God to drive them out for their Pride and Arrogancy in attempting to make themselves equal with God.

We have also in the second Lesson for the Evening the History of *St. Michael* the Arch-angel's contest with the Devil about the Body of *Moses*, which some will have to be about the rebuilding the Temple, and restoring God's Service at *Jerusalem*. *Moses* being the Type of *Christ*, they would have the Jewish Temple meant by the Body of *Moses*, as the Christian Church is styled the Body of *Christ*. Others think it was meant the real Body of *Moses*, which *St. Michael* having conceal'd by God's special Order, the Devil endeavoured to discover, thereby designing to entice Men to Idolatry by superstitiously worshipping his Relicks. But be the contest what it will, thus much is recorded for our Instruction, that tho' the Angel might

might have justly spoke all manner of ill against him, yet he would not use any reproachful Language, nor bring any railing Accusation against him, but said only *the Lord rebuke thee.*

From the observation of this Feast learn we,

First, Thankfully to adore the Wisdom and Mercy of God for constituting such glorious Beings to minister to our Salvation, by aiding and assisting us in all our religious Performances and righteous Undertakings, as well temporal as spiritual.

Secondly, Take care that our Gratitude be right placed, and that we do not rob God of his honour by transferring any of that divine Worship to the Creature which is only due to the Creator, remembering always that there is only *one Mediator between God and Man, viz. the Man Christ Jesus.*

Thirdly, From St. Michael's behaviour we learn how unbecoming it is for any Man (especially the Clergy) to use any injurious railing Language or scandalous personal reflexions in religious Controversies.

And that we may be enabled chearfully to discharge all our religious Duties, we desire Almighty God in the Collect " To grant that as his holy Angels always do him Service in Heaven, so by his appointment they may defend and succour us upon Earth.

St. LUKE the Evangelist, Octob. 18.

THIS day we observe the Feast of St. Luke, one of the four that wrote the History of our Saviour, and thence call'd *St. Luke the Evangelist.*

He was born in that every way famous City of *Antioch* the chief City of *Syria*, a place as fertile for its Soil as rich by Trade; as much fam'd for Learning as 'twas noted for Civility; not only honour'd with the birth of this day's Saint, but also with that peculiar favour and blessing Heaven bestow'd upon it, of first giving the name of Christians to the Disciples of *Christ*.

St. *Luke* having in this place the opportunity of a liberal Education, his natural parts met with the advantage of improvement in all parts of humane Learning; but Physick was the study he chiefly apply'd himself to.

He was a Jewish Profelyte, and probably had not embraced the Christian Faith, till St. *Paul* came to *Antioch*, and during his abode there, was converted by him (himself confesses he was not an *Eye-witness from the beginning*) with whom afterwards he became an inseparable Companion, and faithful fellow labourer in the Gospel, whom he attended in all his dangers and his several arraignments at *Jerusalem*, also waiting upon him in his hazardous Voyage to *Rome*, where he both assisted him in his necessities, and in those ministerial Offices which St. *Paul's* confinement would not give him leave to discharge; and staid with him when others forsook him, which constancy or Friendship so far endear'd him to St. *Paul*, that he not only own'd him for his faithful fellow Labourer, but in his *Epistle to the Ephesians*, he calls him the beloved Physician, and the Brother, whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all Churches.

It is generally thought he did not wholly leave St. *Paul* before his Martyrdom, tho' some say he left him at *Rome* for some time, and travell'd into *Egypt* and the parts of *Lybia*, where he preached the Gospel, converted great numbers, and took upon him the Episcopal Charge of *Thebais*. Others

say he first preached in *Dalmatia* and *Galatia*, and then in *Italy* and *Macedonia*, where by indefatigable Labours, maugre all dangers and difficulties, he faithfully discharged his trust committed to him. Historians disagree both about the place and manner of his Death, some affirming him to dye in *Greece*, others in *Egypt*, and others in *Bithynia*; some will have him to dye a natural, but more a violent Death; those that are for the latter give this account of his Martyrdom, that having successfully preached the Gospel in *Greece*, and baptized many Converts, a party of Infidels who had conspired against him, drew him to Execution, and for want of a Cross to dispatch him immediately, they hang'd him upon an Olive-tree in the 80th or 84th year of his Age. Others make him to be martyr'd at *Rome* after *St. Paul's* first two Year's Imprisonment there and departure thence; where *St. Luke* being left as his Deputy was soon after put to Death; and his concluding the History of the *Acts of the Apostles* at that time seems to confirm this Opinion, which certainly he would never have left so imperfect if he had liv'd any considerable time after *St. Paul* left that place. His body being taken care of by some of his Friends, was by the command of *Constantine* or his Son, remov'd to *Constantinople*, and buried in that great Church erected to the memory of the Apostles.

In the Epistle, after *St. Paul* had advis'd Bishop *Timothy* to prepare himself to endure Afflictions, that he might give a good proof of his Ministry by faithfully and courageously doing the work of an Evangelist, he tells him for his encouragement, that having himself preserved his Integrity and kept the Faith, he was very ready to lay down his Life for it, notwithstanding he does not without some regret complain of *Demas* and some other Brethren that had forsaken him in his afflictions; but comforted

forted himself that he had still one sincere faithful Friend that stuck by him in all his Adversities, *Only Luke is with me.*

Hence we learn that as nothing is more ungenerous and unchristian (tho' nothing more common) than to forsake a Friend in adversity; so no relative Duty, no act of Charity is more incumbent upon us, than to stick close by, assist and do all the good Offices we can to Persons in afflictions, especially such as suffer for Righteousness sake. A noble copy of this christian piece of generosity we have set us by this day's Saint, whose praise is in the Gospel, who as he was called from being a Physician of the Body to be a Physician of the Soul, we are taught in the Collect to pray that "By the wholesome Medicines of the Doctrines delivered by him, all the Diseases of our Souls may be healed through the Merits of Jesus Christ."

St. SIMON and St. JUDE, Oct. 28.

THIS day we commemorate two Apostles, *St. Simon and St. Jude.*

Several conjectures are made about *St. Simon*; some will have him to be one of the Brethren of our Lord, *i. e.* one of the Sons of *Joseph* by a former Marriage. Because he is surnam'd the *Canaanite*, some conclude him to be born at *Cana* in *Galilee*; others give the reason why he was so call'd because he was the Bridegroom whose Marriage our Lord honour'd with his first Miracle of *turning Water into Wine*. But by *St. Luke* he is called *Simon Zelotes*, or *the Zealot*, which implies the same in the *Greek* as *Canaanite*, in the *Hebrew* and *Jewish* Language, therefore the name has no

rela-

relation either to his Birth or Countrey, which signifies no more than to be *Zealous*; which new name was either given him from his ardent zeal and love to his Master, or because before that time he had been one of the Sect call'd *Zealots*, either a distinct Sect of it self, or a Branch of the Pharisees, who were zealous asserters of the honour of the Law, and strictness and purity of Religion; and in imitation of *Phinehas* (who in a zealous Passion slew *Zimri* and *Cosbi*, whom they also call'd their Patron) they assum'd to themselves a liberty to execute capital Punishments without waiting for the formality of the Law.

After the descent of the Holy Ghost, this Apostle travelled preaching the Gospel in *Egypt*, *Cyrene* and *Africa*, from thence into *Lybia* and *Mauritania* for the same purpose, and at last so warm was his Zeal, that notwithstanding the Coldness of the Climate, he sailed into *Britain*, where after many Tribulations he suffer'd Martyrdom by the Infidels for preaching to them the Faith of *Christ*. Others will have it, that after his preaching the Gospel in *Egypt*, he met with the Apostle *St. Jude*, and suffer'd Martyrdom with him in *Persia*. But this account is not rely'd upon, because not mentioned by any Author that writes *St. Jude's* Life, who is the other Apostle whose memory we this day celebrate. He is describ'd in the Gospel by three several names, *Jude*, *Thaddeus* and *Lebbaeus*. These other names were probably given him to distinguish him from *Judas Iscariot*, as well as to denote his Prudence and Zeal, which those two names properly import. *St. Matthew* and *St. Mark* never call him *Jude* or *Judas*, lest they should confound the righteous with the wicked, and for that reason probably he both calls himself and is styled by others, *Jude* the Brother of *James*, and *Judas* not *Iscariot*. Being another
Son

Son of *Joseph*, he was also call'd one of our Lord's Brethren. *St. Matthew 13. 55. Are not his Brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon and Judas?* The time of his being call'd is uncertain, for we have no account of him till we find him in the Catalogue; and tho' he afterwards became a constant attendant upon our Lord, yet we have nothing more than his name particularly recorded of him in the Gospel, except one question he propounded to our Saviour, upon his telling them how he would particularly manifest himself to them after his Resurrection; whereupon this Apostle dreaming (with the rest) too much of temporal Grandeur, asked him for what reason he would *manifest himself to them and not to the World?* To which our Lord reply'd, *that the World was neither capable nor worthy to enjoy the divine Presence*, in that it was *both a stranger and an enemy to him and his Doctrine*; and that they were only good Men and religious Observers of his Will, whom God would honour with such familiar converse, and whom he design'd to be *Witnesses of his Resurrection*.

After the Ascension he preach'd in *Judea* and *Samaria*, and then travelled thro' *Samaria* into *Idumaea*, and afterwards to *Syria* and *Mesopotamia*; at last he is said to have travell'd into *Persia*, where after great Success in his Apostolick Office, he was cruelly murdered by the *Magi*, for the freedom he took in rebuking their Superstitions.

The Epistle is the beginning of that general Epistle *St. Jude* left behind him, wherein he exhorts all Christians to Constancy and Perseverance in the Profession of their Faith.

In the holy Gospel our Saviour commands his Disciples to *love one another*, and the reason he gives them for Love and Unity among themselves is, because he was going to send them into a World where neither they nor their Employ should meet

meet with any love or respect; but on the contrary, were to expect nothing but hatred and persecution for the Name of *Christ*; which prediction of our Blessed Saviour's we have seen sufficiently fulfilled in the History of the Lives and Deaths of those blessed Apostles and Martyrs whose Festivals our Church celebrates; and that we may solemnize both this and the other days the Church appoints to be kept holy with a true Spirit of Devotion, love one another, and persevere in that holy Faith built upon the Foundation of the Apostles, *Jesus Christ* being the Corner-stone, we are taught in the Collect to pray, " That we may be so joined together by their Doctrine, that we may be made a holy Temple acceptable unto God thro' *Jesus Christ*."

ALL-SAINTS Day, Nov. 1.

THE Church holds this Festival in memory of *all Saints*, and that for several Reasons, as,

First, Because in the particular Feasts we have already celebrated in honour and memory of the Saints and Martyrs, we may justly be thought to have omitted some part of our duty through infirmity or negligence.

Secondly, Because each of those Saints particularly in whom God's Graces have been eminent, would be too burthensome if not impossible.

Thirdly, As the Church after having in a most excellent order solemnized the high Feasts of our Lord, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, thought it most seasonable to conclude those Solemnities with a Festival of full special and express Service to the holy, ever-blessed and glorious Trinity:

So in-like manner she thinks it fit to end her lower Feasts celebrated in memory of those early Saints and Martyrs with the observation of one Festival to commemorate the Saints in general.

And as amongst other Errors crept into the Church before the Reformation, we may justly reckon several of the then Feasts of the Church enjoyn'd under severe Penalties to be observed in memory of such imaginary Saints and Martyrs, as either never had been, or were notoriously vicious; therefore our Reformers to remove such a manifest offence given to weak Brethren, enjoyn'd no other Festivals to be observed in the Church, but such only as we have just grounds from holy Scripture gratefully to commemorate; yet because there have been many other good and holy Men (not mentioned in holy Writ) whose Virtues are imitable, and whose Memories ought to be had in remembrance; upon that account and the reasons before-mentioned this day is kept holy, wherein we honour God in his Saints in general. And also that we who remain here below may be encouraged by their good examples to *run the race that is set before us with patience*, imitate them in the purity of their Lives, freely and resolutely own the profession of our Faith, constantly adhere to the Truth thro' dangers and persecutions, do what good we can to others both by our pattern and precepts, and if thereto call'd by the Providence of God, seal the Testimony of our Faith with our Blood.

And to encourage us patiently to undergo indignities and persecutions, our Blessed Saviour (in the Gospel for the day) sets before us the example of the good old Prophets, with the promise of a blessed reward to all such as shall with courage and constancy undergo the same sarp.

Blessed

Blessed are ye when Men shall revile and persecute and speak all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake, Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven, for so they persecuted the Prophets that were before you.

The Collect refers to that Article of our Faith *the Communion of Saints*, that as we have in common one God, one Faith, one *Christ*, one Spirit, one Baptism, one Hope, so being thus knit together in one Communion and Fellowship in the mystical Body of *Christ*, and by that means made Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God, and of the same Family with those in the Church Triumphant in Heaven; and as we are bound to bless God for them, rejoyce for their Happiness, and give thanks for their labours and prayers for us, we are also taught by the Church in the Collect to pray for Grace
 “ to follow those blessed Saints in all Virtue
 “ and Godliness of living, that we may come
 “ to those unspeakable Joys which God has pre-
 “ pared for all those that unfeignedly love him
 “ thro’ *Jesus Christ*.

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